BF
1321
.M657p
1922

THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF THE
SUPERCONSCIOUS

or

THE HIGHER PHENOMENA
of the
SAINTS AND MYSTICS
viewed in the light of
THE COUNTER-PHENOMENA
of the
PSYCHICS AND TRANCE-MEDIUMS
and

vindicating the Overwhelming Brilliancy of the Divine Light against its obscure and occult distortions

---

A Theory of Supraliminal Intuition overpowering the trance-control and showing the Transcendence of the Supernatural over the rival forms of Supernormal Cognition

---

A preliminary contribution in aid of a clearer understanding of this mysterious subject

by

PHILO LAOS MILLS
S.T.D., T.O.C.D., M.A.O.S.
Author of
"Prehistoric Religion," "Creation versus Evolution," etc., etc.

CONTRARIA
CONTRARIIS
CURANTUR

PRICE ONE DOLLAR

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PRESS
WASHINGTON, D. C.
1922

BF 1321 qM657p 1922

00940010R

NLM 05006384 8

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

ARMY MEDICAL LIBRARY

FOUNDED 1836

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF THE
SUPERCONSCIOUS

or

THE HIGHER PHENOMENA
of the
SAINTS AND MYSTICS
viewed in the light of
THE COUNTER-PHENOMENA
of the
PSYCHICS AND TRANCE-MEDIUMS
and

vindicating the Overwhelming Brilliancy of the Divine Light against its obscure and occult distortions.

A Theory of Supraliminal Intuition overpowering the trance-control and showing the Transcendence of the Supernatural over the rival forms of Supernormal Cognition

---

A preliminary contribution in aid of a clearer understanding of this mysterious subject

by

PHILO LAOS MILLS
S.T.D., T.O.C.D., M.A.O.S.

Author of

"Prehistoric Religion," "Creation versus Evolution," etc., etc.

CONTRARIA
CONTRARIIS
CURANTUR

PRICE ONE DOLLAR

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PRESS
WASHINGTON, D. C.
1922

243980

BF
1321
.M657P
1922

Nihil Obstat:—
Joseph Bruneau, S.T.D., S.S.
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:—
✠Michael J. Curley,
Archbishop of Baltimore.

Nov. 27th, 1922.

Copyright, 1922
by
Philo Laos Mills

©CLA690782

DEC 27 1922

Cardinal's Residence, Baltimore, Md.
March 25th, 1920.

My Dear Dr. Mills:

In view of the deplorable havoc that is being wrought in our midst by the godless evolutionism and materialism of the day, I cannot but welcome most cordially your valuable contributions on the opposite side. Personally I am convinced that the days of Darwinism are numbered. Any science that will serve to show that man was created in the image and likeness of the Almighty cannot but merit the highest commendation of every sincere and right-minded thinker. May God bless you in your noble undertaking and secure the widest publicity for your excellent work.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

J. Card. Gibbons

Archiepiscopal Palace, Malines, Belgium.
July 5th, 1920.

Dear Dr. Mills:

I am much obliged to you for having sent to me your excellent paper on Anthropology.

The view you take is most interesting, and the data and arguments you array in support of it are indeed impressive.

It shows once more that Christian tradition has nothing to fear from sound scientific research, and goes a long way towards freeing us definitely from the unnecessarily humiliating parentage which some presumptuous advocates attempt to assign to us.

Yours very truly in Christ,

✠ D. J. Card. Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

THE UPPER AND THE LOWER VISION

"The higher reason is that which is intent on the contemplation and consultation of things eternal."—*St. Augustine, De Trinitate, XII.*

"From certain imagined forms there cannot come to the perceiver any intellectual knowledge that is beyond the natural or acquired faculty of his intellect; which is also evident in dreams, in which, though there is some prefiguration of the future, yet no ordinary dreamer understands their meaning."

"But through these sights and sounds, which appear in the works of the magicians, there frequently comes some intellectual cognition which exceeds the capacity of his intellect, such as the revelation of hidden treasures or the manifestation of future events; and sometimes also from certain documents true things may be seen to correspond to this kind of science."

"It must be admitted, therefore, that those persons perceiving or conversing do not see according to the imagination only, or, at least, that this happens by virtue of some superior intelligence."—*St. Thomas Aquinas, Contra Gentiles, III, c.* 104.

"It is in efforts of difficult self-restraint and deliberate reflection that the consciousness of the ego reaches its highest level."—*Michael Maher, S. J., Art. "Consciousness," Cath. Encycl.* 1910.

THE DOUBLE SOURCE OF SUPERNATURAL EVIDENCE

"While nature attests the Being of God more distinctly than it does His moral government, a miraculous event, on the contrary, bears more directly on the fact of His moral government, of which it is an immediate instance, while it only implies its existence. Hence, besides banishing ideas of fate and necessity, miracles have a tendency to rouse conscience, to awaken a sense of responsibility, to remind of duty, and to direct attention to those marks of divine government already contained in the ordinary course of events."

"With regard to the argument from prophecy, which some have been disposed to abandon on account of the number of conditions necessary for the proof of its supernatural character, it should be remembered, that inability to fix the exact boundary of natural sagacity is no objection to such prophecies as are undeniably beyond it; and that the mere inconclusiveness of some of those in Scripture as proofs of the Divine Prescience has no positive force against others contained in it, which furnishes a full, lasting, and, in many cases, growing evidence of its inspiration."—*Cardinal Newman, Essays on Miracles, pp.* 12, 68.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE SUPERCONSCIOUS

or

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE 'OVER-SOUL'

"Light hath no fellowship with darkness. For, as the apostle saith, 'The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.' The effects of these visions in the soul are quietness, enlightenment, joy like glory, sweetness, purity, love, humility, inclination or elevation of the mind towards God." "This knowledge consists in a certain contact of the soul with the Divinity, and it is God Himself who is thus felt and tasted, though not manifestly and distinctly, as it will be in glory. But this touch of knowledge and sweetness is so strong and so profound that it penetrates into the inmost substance of the soul, and the demon cannot interfere with it nor produce anything like it, because there is nothing else compatible with it, nor infuse any sweetness or delight which shall at all resemble it."[1]

"Granting the existence of a spiritual world, it is necessary to be on our guard against the invasion of our will by a lower order of intelligence and morality. The danger to the medium lies, in my opinion, not only in the loss of spiritual stamina, but in the possible deprivation of that birthright we each are given to cherish, our individuality, our true selfhood; just as in another way this may be impaired by sensuality, opium, or alcohol."[2]

Contrast is sometimes the most efficient means of bringing out the salient points of a system, provided those contrasts be fair, forcible and well-founded. They must not be dictated by a malicious tendency to distort the enemy's logic, if that logic be good and his premises unshakable.

But here are two statements emanating from two very eminent sources which may safely be trusted to embody conclusions which are representative and which cannot well be shaken by any spirit of hyper-criticism.

The first comes from one of the greatest masters of modern mysticism,—a saint, as spiritually exalted as he was psychologically phenomenal.

The second is from the pen of a very able and well-balanced expounder of much that goes by the name of modern occultism,—a gentleman whose rare and refined judgment deserves to place him in better company than that of a group of paranoiacs. He is accepted by many as one of the safest and sanest authorities on a subject which requires very delicate handling. Though not of our own, he is a remarkably fair antagonist.

My purpose in bringing these statements into prominence may perhaps be surmised. If their truth be admitted, it will follow that there are powers in man that cannot be reduced to a common denominator, but are as wide apart as the two poles. An old psychology will have to be resurrected, giving due place to the moral dignity of man no less than the unique character of certain psychical experiences. And this, it will hardly be questioned, is a matter of fundamental moral and intellectual importance to the human race.

---

[1] St. John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, I, 4, 1; II, 24, 6; II, 26, 5.

[2] Sir William Barrett, F. R. S., On the Threshold of the Unseen (New York, 1920), pp. 251–252.

Let us come at once to the main point at issue.

If there is anything that impresses the most casual purveyor of modern literature, it is the renewed interest that is everywhere being shown in the mysterious and supersensible. People are appealing on all sides to a world of 'ethereal' manifestations as an antidote to the heart-rending trials and tragedies of this vale of tears. Moreover, they demand visible and tangible proof of the existence of such a world; and within certain limits they have a reasonable right to make the demand. Did not the Savior seal His words by His visible wonders? Did He not offer His miracles as a confirmation of His teaching? Did He not convert the doubting Thomas by the sense of touch and assure His followers that they would operate even greater marvels in His name? Where are these wonders in our own day and hour? And they appeal to that vast body of occult experiences recently brought to light as supplying the apparent deficiency, as proving beyond a doubt what no other order of facts can give them, the certainty of a future existence and of a bright and happy blessedness in the life to come.

'We have probed the superworld,' they will tell us, 'and we have found it to be a fact and no fiction. Could the Redeemer read the thoughts of others? We can do the same. Could He disinter the past and look with unerring vision into the future? We have a similar power. Could He control the forces of nature and cause distant objects to do His bidding? There are exceptional states of the organism in which this also can be effected. Could He make the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and the deaf to hear? These are faith-cures which many have wrought by the power of suggestion. Could He call back the dead and raise His own body from the tomb? We are not at all sure that even this has not been accomplished by some mysterious power of revitalisation or reincarnation of which as yet we are ignorant. In any case, *a large part* of the evangelical wonders can be duplicated; they can be reproduced under the most exacting conditions of sight and touch; and we challenge the world to show us anything of a similar kind in the ranks of their stifling orthodoxy. These are not pipe-dreams, but rock-bottom realities; and we defy you to supply the demands of a wailing humanity with equal force? Can you offer us anything more convincing, more comforting, more sense-compelling'?

Such is about the average position of the modern investigator of the unseen,—the man who has made an apparently honest attempt to get what he can out of all that is left to him in the way of 'evidential' phenomena.

Now we have no desire to shirk the challenge nor to cast any aspersions on his veracity nor on the validity of many of his findings. Some of these things do unquestionably happen and may, for aught we know, be attributable to a supramundane Agency. But the pity of it is that this well-meaning defender of the immortal soul has measured the whole of human psychology by only one of its parts, and that the least inspiring part of the vital composite. For nearly all his phenomena require a greater or less passivity in the mind or will of the subject which robs him of his limelight consciousness and of his masculine self-control. With few exceptions, they are coerced, cumbrous and artificial. Can these be called desirable symptoms? Against this morbid tendency we place a principle which should appeal, we trust, to every clear-headed thinker:

Any power which sharpens the intellect and will and directs them into noble and heroic channels is of higher or heavenly origin. Any power which enfeebles those finest of human faculties or obscures them in the meshes of the unconscious is more or less baneful or demoniacal in its ultimate character.

Of course we do not thereby insinuate that every modern psychic is for this reason hopelessly deluded or 'demonised.' Happily, such is not the case. Yet a cumulative proof must be given that he will satisfy this very elementary test of what most people regard as a genuine and germane illumination.

This proposition should commend itself to any person who does not despair of the normative power of human reason. If we can no longer argue, there is the end of the present argument. Not that there is anything inherently sinister in what we call the 'unconscious.' Night by night we sink into some such condition of coma, and much pain and misery is avoided by not adverting to its existence. It is one of nature's most soothing anodynes. Even revelations may be given in dreams, and death comes as a welcome relief to a worn-out mechanism, all too busy with the fleeting phantasms of the moment. Jacob's ladder and Joseph's guiding star show moreover that the supernatural may invade this land of shades and make it subservient to its own policies.

But what we mean to imply is simply this,—that we cannot commend such a state of apparent 'nirwana' as more than a transitory means of medication, not as in itself desirable as a permanent and perfect possession of the human ego. However marvellous the phenomena that may accompany it, *we cannot surrender our personality to a convulsive catalepsy, but should rather prepare it for an illuminative ecstasy, a condition in which those same phenomena are not only immeasurably surpassed, but the entire mental and moral complexity is indefinitely strengthened and raised to a superior plane of operations.* Such a science of measuring the soul according to its highest functions we shall call 'The Psychology of the Superconscious.'[3]

Here then we have our main position on this subject expressed in a few words. It is our object to bring out the essential superiority and inviolable sanctity of our God-given powers of *knowledge* and *love* against the shameful travesties of those powers that we find in many of the sordid and soul-eclipsing practices of the modern trance-mediumship. Most people have an instinctive horror at the thought of annihilation, still more at the prospect of being swayed or controlled by a foreign influence. They cannot even 'go under ether' without much courage, and sleep itself is not always fraught with the most quieting and comforting assurances. To many of these our present argument should come as a Godsend and a fresh message from the skies. For it will demonstrate that there is no 'unconscious' in the sense of total eclipse on the one hand; on the other that the apparently startling phenomena of the subconscious will melt away before the electric glare of the superconscious, that the latter is in fact the medium, though not the source, of the most astounding wonders that have ever been operated in the history of the human race.[4]

To prove this point we shall follow the method of comparison, by letting each party tell its own tale. Let us see what is claimed by the sons of light and place it side by side with what is found by the children of twilight; then we can draw our own conclusions. If it can be shown that the master-minds of the human race stand as a unit on the question of a supra-liminal order of inspiration and that many of them have had the power of sealing that certainty by the operation of marvels far exceeding the unhallowed orgies of its subconscious ravings, it will be one more reason for exchanging Freud for Franzelin, the pitiable gropings of the half-animal man for the sublime illuminations that come to us from a super-terrestrial source.

[3] Compare H. E. Cardinal Mercier, A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy (London, 1919), Vol. I, pp. 284–291, on 'The Psychology of the Fully-Conscious.' St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, q. 12, on the 'Higher Conscious.'

[4] See in this connection Dr. Gustave Geley, From the Unconscious to the Conscious (London, 1920), p. 299ff., on 'The Realisation of Sovereign Consciousness.' "There will come a time when this consciousness, grown to its full stature, will be able to transcend all its limitations, to attain to what is now inaccessible, to understand what is now incomprehensible,—the thing in itself,—the Infinite,—and God." p. 325,—a wild exaggeration of a true doctrine imperfectly focussed.

No finite being can evolve into 'infinite consciousness' nor will it ever comprehend the Incomprehensible. But the blessed may be said to 'see all things' in the Divine Essence in so far as they are congruous and proportionate. S. Thom. Sum. Theol. I, q. 12, art. 7, 8.

NOTE: The term 'superconscious' should be taken in the intensitive, not the exclusive sense. It betokens that which is *supremely* conscious, not that which lies beyond all consciousness. It is that which knows itself *as* knowing by a double act of reflection: 'I know that I know that it is *I* that knows.' Compare Michael Maher, S. J., Psychology (1907), on 'Self-Consciousness.'

A few of the evangelical data on this subject might here be premised.

"*I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*"[5] "*If therefore the light that is within thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*"[6]

Whatever else may be contained in these portentous phrases, it seems plain enough from their wording that the greatest Genius who ever walked this planet boldly severs the world of light from the world of darkness and makes the former the bringer of a flood of mental perspicuity and moral force. Nay more, it is a light that shall never fail:

"*And I will ask the Father and he will send you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever.*"[7]

This Comforter is nothing less than the Holy Ghost of Isaiah, "*the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and of the holy fear of the Lord.*"[8]

He is no mere abstraction, but an intensely vivid vital force; stimulating, not eclipsing the faculties of man, and permeating, as the mystics have it, into "*the very substance of the soul.*" He is also the Author of peace and love, not only in the Johannine, but also in the highest Pauline sense, a "*charity which hever faileth,*" "*which heareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*"[9] A sublimer concept could hardly be broached nor a more convincing test instituted: "*By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*"[10]

Light and love are thus welded together as inseparable elements; it is impossible to have one without the other and not to compromise the integrity of the spirit. A soulless science is as insufferable as a squalid sentimentalism. 'United we stand, divided we fall,'—such seems to be their motto.

And more than this. The Galilean wonder-worker makes very little of dreams and trance-conditions, if He does not repudiate them as the possible avenues of the evil one. The raising of the 'sleeping' daughter of Jairus, the cure of the 'falling' sickness, the purge of the 'possessed,' the expulsion of the 'demons' into the Gadarene swine, the driving out of the 'spirit of uncleanness,'—much of this implies a condition of lethargy, if not always of demonic control, which can only be lifted by the use of a strongly allopathic medicine. *Contraria contrariis curantur.* Not only does He heal the patient by shaking him out of the stupor, but the means He employs are such that the sufferer is immediately restored to the normal, and this without any mesmeric mystifications. "*Hold thy peace and come out of him.*"[11] Such a restoration is not effected by throwing the patient into a still deeper trance, but rather the opposite. It implies a power of de-hypnotisation,—of calling him back to a condition of mental and moral equilibrium. The suggestion, if any, comes from above, not from below the threshold of consciousness. Never does He sanction the state of 'passivity' in a single instance. Moreover, His own power of self-control is so phenomenal that even the agony of the Cross cannot swerve Him from uttering seven inspired oracles. He even 'descends into hell' to preach to the spirits in prison, preserving His individuality and identity from beginning to end. He is always and everywhere the same strong and self-possessed, the same conscious and commanding Personality.

This is brought out by several modern writers who, however excellent much of their analysis, are not inclined to lay too much stress on the Divine character of the Operator and His unparalleled prodigies. While a majority still see only the human, imperfect, tentative side of these wonders, assigning them for the most part to occult influences or the natural power of suggestion, there are one or two who boldly insinuate a superhuman, if not a supernatural Power for their production.

---

[5] John 8, 12. [6] Matt. 6, 23. [7] John 14, 16. [8] Isa. 11, 2. [9] I Cor. 13, 7. [10] John 13, 35. [11] Luke 4, 35.

"*Jesus Himself was the most stupendous psychic phenomenon the world has ever seen,*" writes a recent author. "*He was a colossal religious genius. History furnishes but one example in which this synchronism of development, physical, intellectual, psychical and moral, was absolutely perfect.*"

Reasons are then given why He cannot be classed with mortal men.

"*The ordinary psychic, in order to produce his phenomena, is compelled to enter the psychical or the subjective condition. In this condition his objective reason is dethroned and he is dominated by the power of suggestion.*"

And this leads up to the following remarkable statement:

"*Jesus was the only one, of whom we have any authenticated account, who never found it necessary to enter the subjective state to enable Him to produce any psychic phenomena. As a result of His ability to exercise His psychic forces without entering the subjective state, He was enabled to avoid the operation of the law of suggestion, and, as a consequence, He was never dominated by a false suggestion. Objective reason was always in the ascendant, and one of the most important of His distinctive characteristics, as compared with other psychics, consisted in His perfect moral and religious character.*"[12]

Then, as to the marvels themselves, which form the external seal of His mission, it need hardly be pointed out that few such wonders have ever been reported of any child of man. The Resurrection alone, not to speak of the Ascension, defies imitation from whatever source. Nevertheless, the minor miracles can be operated and even exceeded by those who take refuge in a power which evidently transcends the order of nature.

"*He that believeth on me, greater works shall he do than I do, because I go to the Father.*" "*In my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, they shall not be harmed by any deadly thing, they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover.*"[13] They are also wonders which He has wrought Himself:

"*The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached unto them.*"[14]

Then He offers a promise which comes as a climax to His baffled hearers:

"*If ye had faith but as a grain of mustard-seed, ye should say to this mountain, 'Be removed and cast into the sea!' And it shall be removed. And nothing shall be impossible unto you.*"[15]

But, speaking of these and other extraordinary powers, He makes it nevertheless abundantly clear that they are the privilege only of the sainted few, those who have mortified the lower man and have reached a high state of perfection:

"*Such cometh not out except by prayer and fasting.*"[16]

Now looking at present aside from the authenticity and reality of these happenings, it must in the first place be allowed that the Savior not only raises His hearers to a wide-awake state of perfect mental intuition and moral self-control, but that He appeals to His own visible marvels as well as those of His followers as a cumulative proof of His supernatural mission. "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*"[17] The Source can be established inductively, by the combined effect which it calls forth,—mental and moral uplift. And here is the final criterion which distinguishes the genuine article from the counterfeit in every age of its manifestation.

Let us take a few examples in illustration.

"*That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, and that which we have seen with our eyes and which we have looked upon and our hands have handled. . that declare we unto you.*" "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.*" "*Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*

[12] T. J. Hudson, M.D., A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life (Chicago, 1914), pp. 152–156. The term 'subjective' is here taken in the sense of sub-conscious, or subliminal, i.e., more or less unconscious, automatic or hypnoidal (ibid., p. 76).

[13] John 14, 12; Mark 16, 17. [14] Matt. 11, 4, 5. [15] Matt. 17, 19. [16] Matt. 17, 20. [17] Matt. 7, 20.

is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."[18]

This strong but discriminating message comes from the apostle of love,—a first-hand witness, and one whose mentality was removed by many leagues from the soporific or the sensational. He is not only an entirely sane and normal personality, but is generally accepted as one of the purest and profoundest virginal lights that has ever brought strength and stamina to the human soul. He is almost like a second sun shining in the firmament of His Master's system. Moreover, his incessant fight against the spirits of evil implies the existence of a world of sinister influences which can be overcome only by the double alembic of light and love, as previously

"*God is light, and in him there is no darkness.*"[19]

"*God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*"[20]

St. John the Divine is never entrapped in the erratic or the abnormal. To be 'in the spirit on the Lord's day' is a condition as far removed from the hypnotic swoon as health is removed from sickness, the sublime from the ridiculous. This finds its confirmation if not its proof in the amazing mental and spiritual stimulus which his life and writings have ever exercised on the noblest and sanest of our race. People do not "gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles." It is an ecstasy which brings forth strength, not weakness; zeal, not heaviness; fervor, not flatulency; brilliancy, not obscurity; true evangelical wonders, not the frenzied orgies of the fakirs.

"*To him that overcometh. . . I will give him power over the nations.*"[21]

With the apostle of the gentiles this dualism of light and darkness, spirit and matter, is equally pronounced, though not of course in the Gnostic sense of absolute cleavage. He also speaks of an opposition to and victory over the Old Adam:

"*Now the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.*"[22]

"*But the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.*[23]

Granting that these are moral generalisations which do not imply more than a twofold tendency in human striving, it is at any rate clear that the apostle puts up a sufficiently striking test for finding the ultimate source of an incitation, heavenly or otherwise. And this is sealed by signs similar to those which we find in the gospels:

"*For to one is given by the same Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the discernment of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally according to his will.*"[24]

How vividly many of these divine gifts or *charismata* shone in his own person as in the whole of the early apostolic cycle, needs no reminder. It takes more than a 'prodigy' to convert the heathen. The wonder must be companied by an interior quickening and spiritual regeneration of the entire system.

It is on this principle that we must interpret not only the 'light' that struck St. Paul on the way to Damascus, but his extraordinary rapture into the third heaven of which he speaks on another occasion. Could a sinking into the 'unconscious' give birth to such an astounding conversion,—one that was to revolutionise the entire perspective of thought and conduct of his day? Could an unhallowed 'swoon' be the father of the greatest apologist and one of the profoundest theologians that the world has ever known? The means are out of all proportion to the ends achieved, as we shall see presently.

[18] I John 1, 1–3; 4, 1–3. [19] I John 1, 5. [20] I John 4, 16. [21] Apoc. 1, 10; 2, 26. [22] Gal. 5, 22. [23] Gal. 5, 19ff. [24] I Cor. 12, 8–11.

Passing on to the middle ages and modern times, we may take the Angelic Doctor and the sainted hero of Pampeluna as fair samples of the highest intelligence combined with heroic holiness and as representative of the best thought on the subject.

For an intellectualist like St. Thomas Aquinas a blind automatism has, needless to say, no function to perform in the world to come.

"*That the divine presence in the life of glory is known by the intellect immediately on the sight of and through corporal things, happens from two causes, viz.,—from the perspicuity of the intellect, and from the refulgence of the divine glory infused into the body after its renovation.*"[25]

"*As God works miracles in corporal things, so also He does supernatural wonders above the common order, raising the minds of some living in the flesh beyond the use of sense, even up to the vision of His own essence, as St. Augustine says of Moses, the teacher of the Jews, and of Paul, the teacher of the gentiles.*"[26] Or briefly: "*By the name beatitude is understood the ultimate perfection of rational or intellectual nature.*"[27]

From that great master of mental diagnostics and spiritual surgery, St. Ignatius Loyola, we are given additional help for finding the true spirit and applying the principle to the interior man.

"*We know true spiritual consolation then to be present when through some internal motion the soul is inflamed with love for its Creator, and can enjoy no creatures except for His sake. When also tears are shed, calling forth that love, whether they flow from sorrow for sin, or from the meditation on the passion of Christ, or from any other cause whatsoever rightly ordained to the worship and honor of God. Lastly, true consolation may be said to flow from any increase in faith, hope and charity; also any joy which is wont to incite the soul to the meditation of heavenly things, to the study of its own salvation, and to the procuring of quiet and peace with the Lord.*"[28]

Coupled with the inspiring words of St. John of the Cross, which I have placed as a caption to the present article, these testimonies will serve to bring out the more salient features which bind them by a common cord of intellectual and moral suasiveness. They are all couched in very similar language when speaking of the highest flights of the soul and the means whereby they are distinguished from the pseudo-phantasms. The Spirit of God stimulates the higher faculties of man, it does not suppress them; and its presence is known by a flood of moral power no less than a refulgence of psychophysical wonders which is in the grasp of every child of Adam, provided he will hitch his chariot to the proverbial star and drink of the waters of life freely. I select these examples because the sources from which they are taken are by common consent admitted to be personalities of very exceptional mental power and insight, even if their still loftier supernatural claims be for the moment put out of the reckoning.

But where, it may be asked, is the proof that these soaring seers were as a fact equipped with the powers attributed to them? Is there any living witness to testify to the reality of even one of their supposed miracles? Are not the sources too far off to merit acceptance in these cold and critical days of our own? And even their occurrence be granted, how is it that they are so few and far between and that such a large percentage are apparently duplicated by the current phenomena of lucidity, levitation, clairvoyance, mind-healing and what not else?

This brings us to the kernel of the question and introduces a viewpoint which may be handled by boldly accepting the challenge and looking the issue straight in the face. For we shall endeavour to establish two important points in connection with this subject:

---

[25] St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, q. 12, art. 3, ad 2.

[26] Idem, art. 11, ad 2.

[27] Idem, q. 62, art. 1.

[28] St. Ignatius Loyola, Rules for the discernment of spirits, No. 3. Compare Michael Maher, S. J., Art. "Consciousness," C. E. 1910: "It is in efforts of difficult self-restraint and deliberate reflection that the consciousness of the *ego* reaches its highest level."

(1) That there has been a continuity of supernatural gifts and graces which makes the occurrence of the miraculous not only a possible but a provable fact, even down to the latest wonder of super-therapeutic fame.

(2) That the allied phenomena in the lower psychical field go in part to reinforce the higher phenomena, while others are so manifestly mixed up with a subjugating automatic control that we can well afford to dispense with their services and leave them to their ultimately demoniacal source.

To prove the first point, we may take a few modern examples, notably that of St. John of the Cross, as showing that his personality no less than his powers stand unexcelled among the more recent ecstatics, while many of his wonders and psychical manifestations have been shared by yet more recent saints and visionaries and find their confirmation in many unsuspected happenings in our own day and hour.

To prove the second point, we shall appeal to the most trusted authorities on the occult in addition to our own body of writers, more especially to Sir William Barrett and other Fellows of the Royal Society, reinforced by the findings of several French and German professors of light and leading.

Such a treatment of the subject should be logically conclusive on the question of the supernatural. Concomitantly, it is a method which is followed or commended by one of the most painstaking collectors of mystical phenomena that has appeared in the last century, the celebrated John Joseph Görres, whom, with a few modern writers like Scaramelli, Poulain, Joly and Devine, we may take as the most approved authorities on Catholic mysticism, not forgetting the brilliant name of Benedict XIV.[29]

In this way we shall avoid the regrettable mistake of making too sharp a dichotomy between the natural and the sub- or supernormal in the one extreme; in the other we shall find that between the traditional heaven and hell "there is a gulf fixed" which no conceivable powers of the human organism have ever been known to bridge. And this should come as a timely warning to those who are continually strumming on the subconscious as the exclusive source of our higher, however mysterious illuminations.

Let us then examine the edifice brick by brick and see what each party can show us in the way of 'convincing' phenomena. We shall begin with the plane of the normal life and slowly 'descend into hell' in the one direction and 'ascend into heaven' in the other, leaving the reader to make his own choice between two rather opposite conditions of human felicity. For, as a fact, there is a borderland of super-activities in the upper region and of sub-activities in the lower; but by no inherent momentum can the former ascend to a supernatural plane of operations, while the latter sink only too easily into a world of submerged passivities which makes them indeed the antechambers to the classic Hades.

---

[29] In their chronological order these works appear as follows: Benedict XIV, "Treatise on Beatification and Canonisation," "Treatise on Heroic Virtue" (Rome, 1752–1756); J. B. Scaramelli, S. J., "Directorium Mysticum" (Venice, 1754), edited by F. V. Voss as a "Compendium" (Louvain, 1857); Johann Joseph von Görres, "Die Christliche Mystik", 5 vols. (Ratisbon, 1879); Aug. Poulain, S. J., "Graces of Interior Prayer" (London-Paris, 1911); Henri Joly, "The Psychology of the Saints" (London–Paris–New York, 1900–1920); Arthur Devine, C. P., "A Manual of Mystical Theology" (London–New York, 1903).

Other useful productions are those of M. J. Ribet, "La Mystique Divine," and B. M. Maréchaux, O. S. B., "Le Merveilleux Divin et le Merveilleux Démonique" (Paris, 1879–1901). Father Baker's "Holy Wisdom" and Dom Hilton's "Scale of Perfection" (London, 1900ff), should also be inspected. For the testimonies of the saints themselves, consult their own works as referred to by the above and as cited in the present text and footnotes *in dicursu.*

I. THE PLANE OF THE NORMAL LIFE

Of the ordinary activities of our waking state little need here be said by way of fresh comment. There are, however, one or two truisms which, old as they are, deserve to be brought into bolder prominence than is generally found in the more superficial writings of the day.

The functions of the human soul are commonly divided into three groups,—the vegetative, the animal and the rational functions. Of these the first two operate for the most part spontaneously, that is, without conscious effort; while the directive power of reason compenetrates the whole and makes it subservient to its intellectual norms and volitional dictates with greater or less success.

And here we have an important principle for clearing up many of the obscurities that surround the complex mechanism of vitality. It may be broadly expressed as follows:

It is the office of reason and free will to hold their ascendancy over the united powers of the human organism, in default of which the actions of man become automatic, mechanical and more or less irresponsible.

Such a proposition carries conviction on its surface and by its own light. It is a fundamental axiom of moral philosophy and is presupposed in every civil or criminal court of justice. If the culprit is no longer *compos mentis*, the case is dismissed and handed over to the asylums and hospitals. Even a slight intoxication or mental aberrancy is enough to plead extenuating circumstances, still more a strong physical coercion over which the culprit has for the time a vastly diminished control. And why? Because it robs him of his *integral selfhood* and reduces him to the level of an automatic machine,—a condition more or less culpable only in so far as it was clearly foreseen and deliberately willed by the conscious subject. Then comes the verdict with its occasionally unwelcome surprises: 'He ought to have known better; he should have looked into the matter; there is no excuse; he must go to the penitentiary,' and so on.

Now we cannot make too much of this ineradicable persuasion of our moral consciousness. For it implies that the empire of reason and free will is *potentially universal*,—that they tend at least to assert their dominion over the united area of human experience, even if their exercise be impeded for the moment in more or less normal and permissible circumstances. Such, for instance, would be regularly recurring condition of natural sleep, during which the higher faculties are undoubtedly dormant and give place to a different set of psychical incitations. To what degree the permissible cases extend to what is known as voluntary hypnotism, is of course a mooted question. But all writers are practically unanimous that true manhood is evidenced only in the wide-awake functions of the memory, the intellect and the will, while the semi-conscious or hypnotic conditions may indeed reveal many hidden marvels of the lower self, but can never be regarded as the highest exponents of human personality. Hence a prohibition from one quarter and a strong caution from another, never to experiment with trance-phenomena of whatever kind, unless the subject is exceptionally hard-headed and there are proportionately grave reasons for making the test. Commands or counsels to this effect come to us from so many different quarters that they are sufficient to support our main contention with considerable cogency.[30]

---

[30] Mercier, A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 313; to wit: "Self-consciousness is a *mark of personality*, for it is a manifestation of reason, and reason it is which differentiates a person from a mere individual, making it a species in the genus individual." It is true that '*persona non constituitur conscientia actuali*,' for it is *sub*-sistent, independent of conscious states. But consciousness and free will exhibit the nature of the subsistent person, reveal his essence. '*Persona est hypostasis rationalis sui juris.*' In the Divine Essence potency and act are of course identical. The Infinite is supremely conscious.

Comp. S. Thom. Sum. Theol. I, q. 29, art. 1–4; q. 32 ff. Pohle-Preuss, Theol. Dogm. De Trinit. p. 224–226. And in man personality is indexed by the '*voluntarium*'; Sum. Theol. II, 1, q. 6–10; Sabetti–Barrett, Comp. Theol. Moral. Tract. I, on "Human Acts"; and is inhibited, though not destroyed, in the hypnotic states, which are not generally lawful. Ibid., Tract. VI, no. 209, q. 6 ff. Furthermore, separated substances, or 'discarnate souls,' are 'incomplete' substances. Sum. Theol. I, q. 29, art. 1, ad 5; but this only in the conventional human sense. Comp. Harper, Metaphysics of the School, Vol. I, bk. 3, c. 2, art. 2.

Mystics and moralists are agreed that sleep, for instance, has little or no meritorious value in itself, being preferably shortened by those who are striking out for higher paths of perfection. It is simply regarded as a necessary means of restoring a shattered system. Monks and hermits are strong on the subject of 'vigils,' and no countenance is given to self-induced dopes or dream-visions under any pretext. Even the genuine trance or ecstasy is not to be sought for its own sake, but humbly accepted only after a strenuous fight against its elusive rivals. The subject is trained to regulate his life according to normal standards and never to look for divine visitations as the possible occasions of vanity or self-conceit. This is not commonly recognised by our modern 'seers.'

"*When the soul gives admission readily to these visions, God witholds them because it cleaves to them and does not fully profit by them; the devil also insinuates himself and multiplies his own visions, because the soul makes room for them. But when the soul is resigned and not attached to such visions, the devil retires, seeing that he cannot injure us then; and on the other hand God multiplies his graces in the humble and detached soul, placing it over many things.*"[31]

In fact, these balmy zephyrs are often sacrificed to the vigorous North-wind

"*All visions, revelations and heavenly feelings, and whatever else is greater than these, are not worth the least act of humility bearing the fruits of that charity which never values nor seeks itself.*". . ."*Let men therefore cease to regard these supernatural apprehensions, and rather forget them, that they may be free.*"[32]

Coming from one who was in almost continual touch with the visibly and sensibly astounding, these words are sufficiently eloquent of the sanctity of the common life, the meritorious power of ordinary every-day actions. Even pronounced believers in the subconscious phenomena caution their clients against a morbid hankering after 'other world' sensations with the object of shirking the responsibilities of their state:

"*The discipline of life on earth is necessary for us all, and none can hope to attain a higher life without the educative experience of trial and conflict. . . There is certainly some evidence indicating that continual sittings for physical phenomena cause an illegitimate and excessive drain on the vitality of the medium, creating a nervous exhaustion which is apt to lead in extreme cases to mental derangement or to an habitual resort to stimulants with a no less deplorable end.*"[33]

That these abnormal and artificial states of oblivion are severely shut out to the faithful,—except perhaps the solitary case of medical hypnotism,—is now sufficiently well known to the general public to make the best of them silently sympathise with the ecclesiastical legislation on the subject. It is dangerous to play with unknown fireworks!

From this it would seem to follow that our ordinary thinking and willing,—coupled of course with supernatural aid,—contains all the instruments of our future blessedness and is, generally speaking, in no need of exceptional flights into regions beyond their normal power and purpose of operation. We cannot live in two worlds at once. It is our business to make all we can of our earthly pilgrimage and gently bend it into higher channels, not to efface it by a false idea of its unimportance. "*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*"[34]

The Incarnation is the best answer to those who despise the hallowed workings of our human nature,—the trivial round, the common task.

But if our present equipment is well adapted to the requirements of our earthly state, it is no less evident that it admits of considerable sharpening in the one direction and of indefinite stunting in the other. The genius is separated

[31] St. John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 11, 7.
[32] Ibid., III, 8, 4.
[33] Sir William Barrett, F. R. S., On the Threshold of the Unseen, pp. 248, 261 ff.
[34] John, 10, 10.

from the imbecile, the saint from the hardened sinner. Inequality is the law of life, whether in the mental or moral order. Moreover, with all the blessings that may accrue to our ordinary, every-day accomplishments, it will hardly be denied that the uncommon and the extraordinary must have a claim on our attention; that the marvellous is at any rate a fact, while the miraculous still challenges us with its ever-recurring signs and supernatural sanctions. What relation have these to the more ordinary workings of our normal life? And to what extent has man been given the power of lifting the veil, of piercing into the unseen?

This introduces our subject at closer range and opens out a problem which should be handled with great caution and reserve as being replete with obscurities and dialectical subtleties. It is manifestly beyond my purpose to offer a complete solution of this question within the compass of a short monograph. Theologians and philosophers are still wrangling over the debatable areas. But for the present I venture to make a few suggestions which focus the more important findings of either side and may help to put law and order into what appears to be a hopeless tangle of conflicting claims and regrettable misunderstandings.

It would seem to be incumbent, in the first place, to allow a somewhat wider sweep to the natural faculties of man than was formerly deemed either possible or advisable. The apparent reproduction of many 'miracles' by artificial means; the supposed duplication of prophecy by clairvoyance, inspiration by second sight, genuine faith-cures by the simple power of suggestion,—and this under the most ordinary and trivial circumstances and by the most commonplace operators,—has inclined many of our best theologians to extend the term 'natural' to much that was formerly regarded as either positively divine or positively demoniacal.[35] This is an important admission, though the boundary-lines are still admittedly vague and cannot always be fixed with unerring certainty. How far these powers may be supposed to extend their sway, would be premature to determine with anything like finality. Some limit must of course be set to created nature. But there are two terms that might be said to express their range with a sufficiently elastic margin,—the supernormal and the subnormal.

By the 'supernormal' is commonly understood that region of psychical manifestations which is *above* the ordinary functions of the human faculties, but is sharply separated from the supernatural as being largely within the domain of regular, however rare, occurrences. To this region are now generally assigned most of the cases of telepathy or telekinesis, a simple sensation or motion of things at a distance. In its higher aspects this becomes what we may call the 'superconscious' and covers the field of clairvoyance and clairaudience, a supposedly clear vision into the past, present or future, with a corresponding perception of mysterious sounds. Here, however, we have come to the 'borderland' in the proper sense of the word, that neutral territory in which nature meets with what we claim to be in excess of her powers to bring forth, which transcends her boundaries. In the 'preternatural' we meet with what is *beyond*, in the 'supernatural' with what is *above* her created capacity; and these must evidently be regarded as generally sealed departments, but as frequently overflowing upon the lower regions. For if the 'thaumatic' supernatural is exceedingly rare and confined to exceptional cases, a miracle *may* take place upon any plane of human mentality, while the 'salvific' supernatural is not so restricted,—grace and the virtues are accessible to all.

Furthermore, these mental flights or spiritual elevations are with few exceptions soothing and stimulating to our higher nature; they take place without the loss or suppression of our higher consciousness; and, if carefully tested by their

[35] Mercier, A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 290. Compare A. Tanquerey, Synops. Theol. Dogm., Vol. II, De Angelis, no. 112. Theol. Moral, Vol. II, nos. 905, 910. Sabetti-Barrett, Comp. Theol. Moral., no. 206, 3°. Lehmkuhl, Theol. Moral., no. 994, Liljencrants, Spiritism and Religion, pp. 247, 268ff.

effects on practical thought and conduct, they may be the occasions of further lights and supernatural uplifts.

By the 'subnormal,' on the other hand, we mean to describe a condition of mental passivity which calls indeed many latent or occult forces into play, but which is *below* the standard of our wide-awake intuitions of truth and error, right and wrong, perfection or perversity, giving place to symptoms which are more or less erratic and erotic, neurotic and pathological. It tends to suppress or suspend the clear-headed captaincy of the soul, beginning with a moderate hypnotism and ending with the demonic swoon. Here also we may distinguish between the 'subnormal' as such,—which never exceeds the powers of nature,—and the 'subconscious,' whose main arteries are grounded indeed in nature, but whose lower veins are feeling out for a world of controlled trance-phenomena which we cannot but regard as gravely deleterious to the vital system, if not actually demoniacal. A catalepsy, accompanied by unheard-of orgies and dragging the patient down to the lowest levels of mental and moral eclipse, is not only below consciousness; it is *below nature*, antagonistic to the established law and order of the universe. Such a realm of malicious influences we shall call the 'subnatural,' in its extreme developments the 'sub-preternatural,' as insinuating most forcibly its violent antipodism to the world of light. Though this terminology is somewhat harsh, I have taken the liberty of using these expressions as forming the logical opposites to the supernatural on the one hand and the subcontained 'preternatural' on the other.

With these general principles, vaguely implied or admitted by our best authors, we may therefore willingly allow that nature admits of a supernormal department in the one direction and of a subnormal area in the other, but that on no account is the supernatural to be confused with the former nor the subnatural with the latter, however vividly these areas may occasionally seem to overlap. Furthermore, between these extreme conditions there lies a normal plane of operations which comes as a balance to the moral structure and bids us not greatly swerve from the appointed means of achieving our last end. The *voluntarium* of the scholastics, embracing the *intellectus agens* and the *intellectus possibilis*, brings out with sufficient force that the memory, the intellect and the will,—supported by supernatural grace,—contain all that is necessary for our present pilgrimage. And if these powers can sink into the subconscious or be lifted into the superconscious, it will imply that the upper and lower regions are alike amenable to our psychic influence, but that the soul-transcending supernatural stands unchallenged in its unique claims upon our higher allegiance.[36]

There is, then, nothing essentially satanic in any department of human psychology,—the entire sweep of the faculties belongs to the Creator. It is only when we wilfully throw ourselves into certain states of mental and moral oblivion as a mere curiosity or with a silent pact with the powers of darkness that we expose ourselves to the incursions of the evil one. Let us now see how we can make good this assertion and how it applies in particular instances.

---

[36] For a more delicate distinction between these various orders consult St. Thom. Sum. Theol. I, qq. 103–115 passim (On the Divine Government); Tanquerey, Synops., Theol. Dogm. Vol. I, De Miraculis, no. 68–90; Vol. II, De Angelis, no. 53–116; De Homine, no. 140–146; Pohle–Preuss, Theol. Dogm. III, p. 180–196, 311ff (on nature and the supernatural); and compare, among others, Dr. Johan Liljencrants, Spiritism and Religion (New York, 1918), pp. 181–247, 268–281. It is a merit of this author that he has 'knocked the devil' out of much that is natural and pathological, though it is a question whether the combined weight of the phenomena is gauged at its full value. (See "The Dublin Review" for Sept., 1920; also the "Journal" of the A. S. P. R. for Jan., 1922, p. 55.) But a powerful and penetrative *critique* like this is sadly needed and goes far to diminish the claims of the preternaturalist for every form of psychical experience that is out of the ordinary. The rather wide sweep of the natural order has always been recognised by the most critical writers. See Scheeben, Dogmatik, I, 1, p. 13ff: "Theologische Erkenntnislehre"; II, 3, p. 239ff: "Natur und Uebernatur"; II, 4, p. 515ff: "Unternatur"; p. 679ff: "Dämonencult, Wahrsagerei, Zauberei, Besessenheit," making important distinctions or reservations.

II. THE DESCENT TO THE SUBCONSCIOUS

(1) THE NATURAL SUBNORMAL

The first condition immediately below our waking state may be conveniently described as the subnormal, as it comes very near the level of our daylight consciousness. It embraces not only every variety of natural sleep, but includes the more uncommon cases of artificial sleep that are procured by a voluntary hypnotism and are accompanied by the so-called "mesmeric" phenomena.

Of our ordinary dream-state there is little to record that is not generally known to the average dreamer. This may range from a simple dope or day-dream to a more or less profound hypnosis, which in extreme cases passes on to the sensational feats of somnambulism. Except for the possible dangers incident to the dream-walk, it seems apparent enough that sleep as such constitutes a perfectly healthy, natural and necessary means of recuperation, being distinguished only by certain subnormal symptoms with which we are all familiar, a certain *insensibility* and apparent suspension of our full faculties. Physiologically, this is explained as a rushing down of the blood from the higher nerve-centers of the brain, with a consequent inhibition of our full powers of self-control. But psychologically, we cannot make an efficient cause out of a mere concomitance; and while it is undeniable that mind and body are normally interlocked in our present state, there are facts of another order which show conclusively that the former is functionally independent of the latter, that the mind may be secretly and silently operative even when the brain is beginning to go to pieces. The existence of infant prodigies with *impaired brain* and of musical or mathematical "idiots" *without a brain* is one of the most startling revelations of modern psychology. Quoting Dr. Hammond, a recent writer makes a great deal of this discovery as implying "a clear and distinct recognition, by one of the ablest living scientists, of a mind which operates when the objective senses are inhibited as in sleep or somnambulism; a mind which is often active and potent, when there is a total absence of power in the objective mind, as in idiocy; a mind which performs its functions with undiminished power after the organ of the objective mind has been *totally eliminated from the cranial cavity*."[1] It would be almost unbelievable were it not supported by authorities of the highest rank. "On the contrary, the less active the cerebral organ, the greater the activity of the superior subconsciousness. It appears in full strength not by a voluntary psychic effort, but in the inaction or repose of the brain; in the state of distraction, reverie, or even of natural or induced sleep. In this subconscious output everything happens as it were *entirely independent of cerebral physiology*."[2] I call attention to this remarkable statement because it comes from Dr. Gustave Geley, Director of the International Metapsychical Institute of Paris, a psychologist of real genius, whose system, however deficient philosophically, brings out a number of far-reaching truisms which threaten to pulverise much of our modern materialism and to turn the Darwinian biogenetics upside down. Even if we share these activities in part with the lower animals and the mind may conceivably operate through the spinal column, their combined implications can hardly be rated at too high a figure.[3]

---

[1] T. J. Hudson, M.D., A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life (Chicago, 1914) pp. 245–246; also chapt. XV, passim. Compare A. C. Hammond, A Treatise on Insanity (New York, 1883), chapt. II, "The Seat of Instinct."

[2] Gustave Geley, From the Unconscious to the Conscious (London–New York, 1920), pp. 131–132.

[3] This system is known as "The New Psycho-Dynamism," according to which "it is mind which 'creates' matter, not matter which 'creates' mind." Comp. Geley, op. cit., p. 228ff. "The idea is no longer a product of matter. On the contrary, it is the idea that moulds matter and gives form and attributes to it. *This is a complete reversal of the materialist philosophy.*" Ibid., p. 66–67. The more's the pity that this author cannot see the necessity of an Absolute Mind to produce the entire complex.

But what is the nature of this submerged mentality and what are its powers? It seems evident that it is not identical with the luminosity of our waking state, as we are not in full control of our thoughts and actions. On the other hand, it is accompanied by a certain 'obscure' lucidity which seems to vary with the profundity of the sleep, but to differ *toto coelo* from our waking condition in that its forms and contents are not remembered, but to all intents and purposes obliterated when we return to the normal. Here is the first suspicious circumstance.

'LUCIDITY' IN THE DREAM-STATE

That we occasionally experience certain lights or 'inspirations' in our dreaming moments will hardly be denied by any thoughtful or reflective person. 'I have slept over it, and now I have solved the problem.' The salutary influence of the pillow-case has become proverbial, and many can testify to a 'clearer head' after a good night's rest. In these conditions external observations have revealed the fact that the sleeper possesses a certain accelerated thought or nerve-action which, however nebulous and at times nefarious, puts on the appearance of an *immediate intuition*,—something sudden and quite often illuminating. The attested cases of clear and clever soliloquizing, of accurately recalling the 'forgotten' past, of babbling in strange and seemingly unknown tongues, of solving difficult puzzles, of apparently seeing things at a distance or quizzing into the future,—all give evidence of a certain amount of perspicuity and propulsive power on the part of the subliminal mind which, whether for good or for evil and however enforced or involuntary, evidently separates it from its normal functions in the waking state. Moreover, it may now be regarded as demonstrated that even the deepest sleep has its dreams, even though we may not always remember them; it seems impossible to completely throttle the mind of man by soporific sedatives of whatever kind. We are always mentalizing to a greater or less degree.[4]

Now this subliminal area has been exploited by many of our modern writers in a manner which seems out of all proportion to its dignity or its importance. They forget that there is another side to these alluring will-of-the-wisps which is far from illuminating. Psycho-analysts, like Freud and Ferenczi, have dedicated entire volumes to nothing but dreams; and however instructive and painstaking much of their laborious research, it can hardly be called elevating, that is, mentally and morally inspiring. To reveal a symptom is not to remove it; and to be forever harping on the disorderly and at times degenerate side of our soporific phantasms can only be excused on the plea of possessing an efficient panacea for controlling those phantasms. Such a panacea we fail to find in the writings of these authors. Their sordid analysis leaves a sour taste in the mouth; and, however much they talk of 'sublimation' or the conversion of the sex-instinct into altruistic values, a permanent cure seems as far off as ever.[5]

As an offset to the inevitable deficiency of this method, Catholic moralists offer us the supernatural power of prayer and penance, with fasting, flagellation and other austerities, as the most efficient means of purging the subconscious, of driving out the spirit of the "unclean." It is Christ's own medicine. Self-control is largely reestablished by these practices and much of the nightmare is alleviated, if not suppressed; though it is evidently part of the Divine Purpose to test the moral endurance of the soul by allowing these subsuggestions to harrow it with greater or less frequency.[6]

---

[4] Hudson, l. c. p., 206. Paul Joire, Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena (New York, 1915), pp. 30–67 (abnormal dreams).

Geley, op. cit., p. 305: "*Individual Consciousness is indestructible and permanent, even when it becomes latent in sub-consciousness.*"

[5] Dr. Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis (New York, 1920), p. 90ff and more or less passim.

[6] J. Cardinal Franzelin, De Sacramentis (Rome, 1868), (general dogmatic basis). St. John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel (ascetical basis).

DREAM VISION . . . . DREAM VOICE

But with regard to the dream-state as such, there is no need to strike out its lurid 'lucidities' with one fell blow nor to put them down generally as more than natural displays of our subliminal powers. I say generally, because the supposed visions of the dead or dying encroach upon the confines of another world for which I am not prepared to speak.

"The boat is sinking . . . O save us!"[7]

To what extent such a premonition of disaster in a distant region might be a simple subnormal feeling of a calamity vaguely anticipated by the mind itself, or how much of it is suggested by the external event or even dictated by a Higher Providence, we have no means of verifying in each individual instance. Both Testaments speak of a "Joseph" who was enlightened in dreams; but their contents were rather different:

Contra:

"The sun, the moon and the eleven stars did obeysance to me"[8].
"Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt."[9]

Human curiosity is rarely satisfied in these visions and their source and purpose have a specially directive and illuminative tendency:

"Rise, Peter, slay and eat!" "Cast thy garment about thee and follow me!"[10]
"John, I am here. Be not afraid. I will set thee free!"[11]

The Prince of the Apostles and the Prince of Mystics stand in a somewhat different category to that of the ordinary dream-talker or nervous visionary.

DEATH VISION . . . . DISCARNATE PHANTASM

That the Lord of Destiny may suffer a soul to reveal itself to another at the hour of death can hardly be contradicted by the sternest theology.[12]

"There is mother. Why mother, have you come here to see me? No, no, I am coming to see you. Just wait, mother, I am almost over. Wait, mother!"[13]

It would be cruel to put down such sweet and consoling experiences as invariably due to hallucination, nor is there any call for such a course. There is often nothing in them to offend our moral and religious sense.

But Catholic deathbeds are apt to be more conversant with supernatural things and not so eager to rush into a purely human embrace:

Contra:

"I see the heavens opened, and the son of man standing at the right hand of God."[14]

This dying confession of St. Stephen goes vastly beyond a reunion-frenzy of the more natural kind, and similar exclamations have ever accompanied the last moments of the most blessed and blameless lives:

"O Lamb of God, I come . . . Thou didst shed thy blood for me."
"Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."[15]

The painless and placid, the almost joyous deaths of the saints, with their 'soul-doves' and their emerging 'globules,' should be an incentive to the more timid to imitate their virtues, while their marvellous lucidities are one more proof that mind and body are two different and distinct entities.

Yet with all the precedents we have for the 'divine dream' and the privileged 'sleep of the just,' it is generally held that the strictly supernatural dream is a

---

[7] Joire, Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena, p. 63. [8] Gen. 37, 9. [9] Matt. 2, 13. [10] Acts, 10, 13; 12, 8. [11] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 94. [12] *"All beings who exist in heaven, hell, or purgatory, or upon this earth, may become the objects of corporal vision."* Scaramelli, Direct. Myst. apud Voss, Compend., p. 355. Comp. Devine, Mystical Theology, p. 513. [13] Barrett, 1, c. p. 158. [14] Acts, 7, 55. [15] Heriz, p. 200.

great rarity and granted only under very exceptional circumstances. For this reason most of us make very little of the sleeping state as full of dangers and delusions for the unwary. "*Though I sleep in my natural state and cease from all exertion, my heart watcheth supernaturally, lifted up in supernatural knowledge.*"[16] It takes an extraordinary saint to combine sleep with sublimation; and this shows that the majority would do well to pay little attention to its phantom-lights. In the meantime the visions of 'discarnate' forms at the hour of death are taken by many to furnish a proof positive of human survival, the element of chance being eliminated by 440 to 1.

"*Between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone. This we hold to be a proved fact. The discussion of its full implications cannot be attempted in this paper, nor perhaps, exhausted in this age.*"[17]

"*Not only is Death no longer the 'King of Terrors,' but it is no longer the 'curse' which man, limited by his physical body and blinded by the illusion of matter, has made it,*"—rather too rosy an estimate, but none the less reassuring.[18]

HYPNOTIC AND MESMERIC PHENOMENA

But if the sleep of nature, however inhibitive of our moral freedom, is evidently a divine ordinance for the building up of a wasted frame, the sleep of art, or the induced hypnosis, has no such lofty purpose to serve, but is, generally speaking, dangerous and deleterious to the human system.

Of hypnotism in general a great deal has been written and recorded in recent times. While there is no reason to question the main contention of its advocates that, when rationally and rightfully administered, it may serve as the means of effecting more or less striking cures, especially in the neurotic field, it is apparently helpless in the face of lunacy, hysteria and advanced cases of catalepsy. This shows, to our way of thinking, that you cannot cure a disease of the 'soul' by injecting small quantities of the same disease; that, however true of physical vaccine, this does not work in the psychical order. *A strong hypnosis cannot be expelled by a weaker one.* It is like casting out Beelzebub by the power of Beelzebub,—a homoeopathic principle which cannot be made to square with the allopathic treatment of the Great Healer, who, as we have had occasion to note, cures the demoniacs by shaking them out of their stupor, implying a power of de-hypnotisation. As soon as our modern pathologists will be able to cure a hopeless idiot by a simple "pass" of the hands, so soon will we begin to believe that they are armed with a power which may be faintly compared to that of the Savior of mankind.

And more than this. His followers have ever been on the warpath against every form of coercive suggestion that would rob the subject of his mental balance or his moral stamina. Only for nervous and physical disorders of a special kind will they consent at times to put the patient to sleep; and this is far more safely and rapidly effected by the use of chloroform.[19] Against these dubious and damaging methods of sanitation we place the genuine cases of mind-healing or mento-mental action which are operated in the waking state and leave the subject in full possession of his powers. To these would then be added the more exceptional cases of instantaneous healing which are apparently preternatural and beyond the range of the subjective faculty. Examples of this will be given at the concluding part of our study, as they belong to the region of the superconscious.

INTERNAL SUGGESTION—AUTOMATIC WRITING

As to the different degrees and qualities of induced sleep, the most common example of the waking dream is furnished by the so-called 'automatic pencil' or the more elaborate 'ouija-board,' through which curious and occasionally startling

---

[16] Ascent, II, 14, 11. [17] Barrett, p. 144ff. Compare Benedict XIV, 'Heroic Virtue,' III, pp. 326–341, on the Dream-Vision. [18] Geley, op. cit., p. 319.

[19] Compare G. Surbled, Art. "Hypnotism," Catholic Encyclopaedia (1910).

messages are said to be received. In this condition the performer is not fully hypnotised, but is rather in a semi-soporific state of passivity, through which he allows the writing-instrument as far as possible to do its own work, free from conscious direction. Any person can try it; but, even with the best of wills or intentions, it is rarely free harmful accessories. As a rule nothing but nonsense will be scribbled out; but every now and then a coherent sentence may be obtained and sometimes it will convey some rather terrible information:

"Pray for the soul of Hugh Lane . . . I did not suffer . . . I was drowned and felt nothing."[20]

The message turns out to be correct; and then the question comes up as to how the information was gathered and who was its author. Was it perhaps anticipated? Or was it prematurely culled from the evening papers?

Under the spell of 'typtology,' or table-writing, we get some remarkable dialogs:

"Are you happy?" "Yes." "Have you suffered?" "For long centuries."[21]

There are even alleged visions of the Redeemer in strangely alluring form:

"I have seen the Christ illuminating the heavens with the splendors of His glory, the Divine Word in His Humanity" . . . "You may have seen a fluidic personage in a luminous atmosphere, but how did you recognise Christ?" . . . "How could I fail to recognise Him? He is my Savior, who became as we were." . . . "If you are in heaven, how is it that you are at the same time on earth? How is it you are here?" . . . "To spread these teachings. God has given us power to work with men."[22]

While many of these communications smack of the orthodox concepts of heaven, hell or purgatory, there are others of largely opposite nature, and Catholic authorities warn us against their deceptive ring.

> *"For the honest, pure and truthful soul there is no Devil nor Prince of Evil such as theology has feigned."*[23]

Though it is not denied that many a fact may filter through transparent falsehood, the contradictory and frequently absurd character of these messages is a sufficient index of their natural origin, not to speak of their probably demonic source. The Spirit of God has never been known to work through ouija-boards, much less through the rappings of inanimate tables.

Contra:

"And I saw a throne set in heaven, and One sitting upon the throne."[24] *"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years."*[25]

The Johannine visions are throughout sober, elevating and consistent; and to talk of planchettes or automatic pencils is to make a pandemonium out of a sublime and well-ordered oracle.

On the other hand, it is not at all impossible that many of the above messages may find their source in the unsuspected powers of the 'writer' himself. Most probably the subliminal ego must be credited with a wider sweep of reality than is commonly assigned to it; and from this point of view the feats would be wholly natural, though apparently 'subnormal.' And with this we mean to imply that they are also dangerous and unhealthy practices, as they expose the subject to prolonged states of dope or mental dizziness which is apt to bring on a softening of the brain, if nothing worse.[26]

---

[20] Barrett, On the Threshold of the Unseen, p. 186ff.
[21] Joire, op. cit., p. 224.
[22] Idem, p. 246.
[23] Lodge, 'Raymond,' p. 353.
[24] Apoc., 4, 2. [25] Apoc., 20, 2.
[26] Barrett, op. cit., pp. 161–189, 253–266, 322ff. Compare J. Godfrey Raupert, K. S. G., Spiritistic Phenomena and their Interpretation (1920), p. 45.

EXTERNAL SUGGESTION—HYPNOTIC CONTROL

When the practitioner is no longer his own medium, but is put to sleep by another who then controls and directs him at his pleasure, we enter the region of dynamic hypnotism, which lends itself so easily to theatrical effects.

"You will now turn to the east and salute the rising sun."

Swung around the stage; pulled hither and thither; forced to kneel, to pray or to dance; to swallow charcoal for sugar or vinegar for champagne,—the pitiable victim obeys the summons unflinchingly; he can even be made to perpetrate the most horrible crimes. He is then a patient in the fullest sense of the word, as he suffers the loss of his manhood. Luckily, such things are now legally prohibited to all but medical experts, and then only to enforce a sufficiently powerful object-lesson. How far they deviate from anything having a remotely divine sanction, need hardly be pointed out. No self-respecting person will allow such liberties to be taken, nor will any human being who in any sense values his dignity or his honor. *"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity."*[27]

MAGNETIC LIGHTS—LOCOMOTOR ENERGY

Then, as to those mysterious emanations coupled with the name of 'mesmerism,' they simply reveal the more sensational aspects of the hypnotic state in so far as it produces luminous effects, either in the body or on surrounding objects. These are the so-called N-rays, human radiations of a more or less latent or invisible nature, but which under certain conditions can be seen by psychics or recorded on sensitive plates.

"The extremities of the fingers as well as the poles of a powerful magnet, placed before the spectroscope, reveal some very distinct colorations."[28]

The head, the feet and the two hands are said to correspond to the four points of the compass, West, East, North and South, or Purple, Orange, Blue and Scarlet.

"The relations are photographically demonstrated between human polarity and terrestrial and cosmic polarity."[29]

However this may be, it is here probably that we find the so-called 'vital fluid' in its most basic form, a perispsychic envelope of attenuated matter which, ordinarily invisible to the human eye, would seem to be a medium for polarised light and to have the power of projecting itself externally as the 'metetheric double.' Through this as an 'astral lever' would then be effected those redoubtable liftings, whirlings or psychodynamic 'imprints,' which simply give evidence of certain hidden forces in nature which still await complete classification. Formerly ridiculed or gravely called into question, the *perisoma* is now very generally regarded as the material basis upon which a large part of the physical feats of occultism take their stand.[30]

There is no need of assuming a hostile attitude to the entire bulk of these phenomena, which, in so far as they are merely natural effluvia of our psycho-physical organism, should worry us as little as the process of drawing sparks out of highly electrical substances. But in view of the fact that most of them take place in rather coerced and abnormal states of the organism, they are tarnished with the same brush of the 'unconscious' which makes the corresponding mental lucidities so suspicious and so questionable. Even if it be granted, in the words of a recent expert, that

"I have seen luminous points of light darting about and settling on the heads of different persons."[31]

---

[27] Apoc., 13, 10.

[28] Emile Boirac, Our Hidden Forces (New York, 1917), p. 213. [29] Joire, op. cit., p. 374.

[30] Compare W. J. Crawford, The Reality of Psychic Phenomena (New York, 1918), passim. Barrett, op. cit., p. 93–94. Geley, op. cit., p. 51–73. Raupert, op. cit., p. 17ff.

[31] Crookes, Researches in Spiritualism (1874), p. 91.

these coronal manifestations suggest at most that man is something of a 'magnet,' not that he is endowed with preternatural powers. The 'halo' of hagiology is a blinding coruscation which tells a very different story:

Contra:

"A great radiant orb was seen by those present encircling the dying saint, the light of which was so brilliant as to dim the other lights in the room."[32]

We are therefore emphatic in repudiating the smallest analogy between magnetic 'water' and the rite of baptism, between magnetic 'passes' and the laying on of hands, between the magnetic 'aura,' masking as the crown of light, and the majestic aureole of the saints, scintillating as the crown of glory. Between the two there lies an ocean of superconscious and supernatural activities which we would beg the occult explorer to navigate.

It will be imperative, however, to admit gradations in the sinking-process and not to wipe out the whole of the subliminal with the double douche of deception and diabolic orgy. Some of the hypnotic and mesmeric conditions are harmless enough and may even wear their sanitary aspects. Nevertheless, it seems abundantly clear that most of them are fraught with nervous strains, morbid symptoms and a moral looseness so flagrant as to constitute a powerful danger-signal to all self-appointed practitioners.[33]

When, however, the hypnosis begins to develop into the deep trance, artificially procured for the purpose of quizzing into the mysteries of a spirit-universe, we are moving in a more debatable region of the subnormal, and one which will take all our waking powers to elucidate. Such a region we shall call the 'subconscious' in the narrower sense as being specially conversant with extraordinary forms of knowledge combined with very extraordinary manifestations.

(2) THE LOWER SUBCONSCIOUS

There is a sense in which this term expresses no more than what we call the 'passive memory,' that vast storehouse of thoughts, words and experiences which lies below the threshold of our actual thinking and willing and is therefore more or less potential or latent. As the *intellectus possibilis* it forms a necessary part of our rational equipment; for we cannot think or will fruitfully without recalling our past thoughts and desires and comparing them with our present impressions. If we have no knowledge of antecedents, we can have no knowledge of consequents. It is a faculty which puts unity and continuity into the mental process, and as such it clearly belongs to the normal plane of its operations.

But the meaning we attach to the term in the present place is a technical one, sanctioned by the current phraseology of the day. By the subconscious is now more commonly understood those advanced states of mental passivity in which the subliminal mind is armed with powers which apparently exceed the range of its normal workings and penetrate into regions otherwise prohibitive of its sway.[34]

TRANCE VISION . . . . TRANCE VOICE INDUCED MATERIALISATION

That remarkable things take place in the deeper hypnotic state will hardly be questioned by those who are not wilfully blind. They are part and parcel of the mediumistic phenomena and are now sufficiently authenticated to merit our serious consideration. They are more than mere lucidities; they claim to be psychical revelations of a very elaborate character; sights and sounds which can be tested by a large number of people, and frequently under the most exacting conditions of

[32] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 199. [33] Raupert, op. cit., p. 51ff.

[34] Compare Geley, op. cit., p. 95, who speaks of "The so-called Supernormal Subconscious," —implying a distinction from ordinary subnormal mentation.

control. Nay more,—what seems incredible to our sober judgment,—the phantasms can even be felt and under favorable conditions photographed by a sensitive camera! This is taken to indicate that the psychical has a tendency to clothe itself in the physical; that if a mental impression is strong enough, it can pass over into a material impression.[35]

Those who sniffle at this astounding claim will have to face the fire of the Royal Society and some of the greatest medical lights of France and Germany, not to speak of our own Catholic experts, who have gone to considerable trouble and risk in getting first-hand evidence.

That most brilliant of all modern chemists, Sir William Crookes, President of the Royal Society and bearer of the Order of Merit, speaks with a voice of authority which few can command, when he says:

"*I have seen a luminous cloud appear which condensed into the shape of a perfectly formed hand that presently faded away. Most astounding of all, phantom forms and faces have appeared; and, under elaborate test-conditions a material and beautiful female figure several times appeared, clothed in a white robe, so real, that not only was its pulse taken, but it was repeatedly photographed, sometimes with the aid of the electric arc-light, and on one occasion, simultaneously with and beside the entranced medium, who was plainer, darker and considerably smaller than the preternatural visitant, the latter coming into a previously searched, closed and locked room in my own house.*"[1]

This was the notorious 'Katie King,' an apparition attested by Dr. Varley and others in independence. "*I held the hand of this strange being,*" says Varley, "*and the half-materialised form of Katie appeared down to the waist, the remainder of the body being missing or invisible.*"[2]

Such a tentative projection goes to show that the spectre was an ectoplasm, not a fraudulent impersonation; and the affair has been sworn to by Dr. Crookes and his colleagues down to our own day.[3] Sir William Barrett, his intimate friend and collaborator, has witnessed similar things and regards the phenomena as "*absolutely inexplicable*";[4] while Sir Oliver Lodge is inclined to see in "*psychophysical interaction*" a possible clue to the mystery.[5] Dr. Paul Joire, the eminent pathologist, endorses the Crookes phenomena, while Professor Richet gives his own experiences at the Villa Carmen and Genoa:

"*Certainly,*" he says, "*I cannot say in what materialisation consists. I am only ready to maintain that there is something profoundly mysterious about it, which will change from top to bottom our ideas of nature and life.*"[6]

Similarly, Dr. Geley comes out with very unambiguous language:

"*I have been able to see, to touch and to photograph the materialisations of which I am about to write. I have frequently followed the event from its beginning to its end; for it was formed, developed and disappeared under my own eyes. However unexplained, strange and improbable such a manifestation may appear, I have no right to put forward the slightest doubt as to its reality.*[7]

Even that acute criminologist of the University of Turin, Professor Lombroso, who was for a long time skeptical of the genuineness of the Paladino trances, was forced to admit in the end that the much-maligned Eusapia, so often detected

---

[35] "The same ideoplastic miracle makes the hands, the face, the viscera, the tissues, and the entire organism of the foetus at the expense of the maternal body, or the hands, the face, or the entire organs of a materialisation," Geley, op. cit., p. 67ff., pointing to the umbilical 'cord,' placental 'membrane,' moans and movements, travail-pangs, etc. of the medium and the mother. But is this the final solution?

[1] Sir William Crookes, P. R. S., O. M., Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism (London, 1874), p. 91ff. [2] Cromwell Varley, F. R. S., apud Joire, l. c., p. 447.

[3] International Psychic Gazette, for Dec., 1917, pp. 61–64.

[4] Sir William Barrett, F. R. S., On the Threshold of the Unseen (1920), pp. 55, 87, and passim.

[5] Sir Oliver Lodge, F. R. S., 'Raymond' (1918), p. 317.

[6] Paul Joire, Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena (1915), pp. 477, 500, 525ff.

[7] Gustave Geley, From the Unconscious to the Conscious (1920), p. 53–54.

in fraud, was in possession of a spirit-control transcending that of 'John King,' who visibly materialised before his eyes:

"*There is evidence of the intrusion of another will, which could not be attributed to the medium or to any person present, but which was in opposition to all, and even to the control, 'John.'*"[8]

But the last sliver of suspicion is removed by the exhaustive experiments of Dr. Adalbert Baron von Schrenck-Notzing, the celebrated Munich physician, whose ultra-rigorous tests and photographs have not only confirmed the previous findings, but may be looked upon as supplying the last word on the subject. They form a résumé of the united body of facts.

"*The importance of Geley's work,*" he says, "*consists not only in the continuation of the methodical observations of these experiments as first elaborated by myself and Mme. Bisson for the region of materialisation; not only in the systematic treatment and collection of facts; but especially in the attempt to find its place in the circle of natural phenomena and in the proof that the reality of such phenomena is one of the strongest arguments against a materialistic and mechanical view of the universe.*"[9]

Mr. Godfrey Raupert, who has had personal experience of some of these marvellous happenings, leaves little room for further doubt in the matter.

"*By means of this 'astral' matter it becomes possible for the spirit agencies to objectivise themselves and to produce most, if not all, the familiar phenomena. They manipulate it in a variety of ways and for an infinite variety of ends. They use it to produce abnormal lights and sounds; abnormal writings, drawings and paintings; or to fashion human faces or entire bodily forms, often very closely resembling the faces and forms of the dead.*" "*The existence of this 'astral' force or matter and its manipulation by the agencies for the purpose indicated, is now admitted by all experts.*"[10]

I simply give these testimonies for what they are evidently worth, refraining from any comments on the nature of the phenomena or the possible causes by which they are produced.

When these abnormal sights are supplemented by sounds, or replaced by them, we get what is called the "trance-voice," a series of jumbled utterances which may proceed from the medium or from the projected phantasm, as the case may be. Inasmuch as human language tends to put a rational content into a mere impression, it gives the affair a still more plausible appearance; the voice or phantom 'speaks' and gives us some clue to its whence or whither.

"*Sybil—Olympus—Water—Lethe—Cave—Clouds—Flowery Banks—Tulips—Elysian Shores,*" etc.[11]

Such are the mumblings of one of the most celebrated talking-mediums of the day; and some very remarkable, though highly questionable messages have been received purporting to connect the physical here with the superphysical hereafter, to give us an approximate picture of the Great Beyond:

"*Yes, he sees the Stars—the Sun—the Great Bear—and the Chariot.*"
"*He has even been on the seventh Sphere—He has seen the Christ.*"[12]

---

[8] Annals of Psychical Science (London, 1908). Compare Barrett, op. cit., p. 313ff, for the additional testimonies of Professors Morselli of Genoa and Bottazzi of the University of Naples. Mr. Hereward Carrington, the noted expert, is prepared to swear that during the experiments at Cambridge, Mass., in 1910, he positively felt and grasped a human hand which slowly melted away in full blaze of the electric light. Public Lecture (Washington, 1922). Fraud and reality seem to be concomitant phases of nearly all these phenomena.

[9] Baron von Schrenck-Notzing, Phenomena of Materialisation (New and complete edition, London–New York, 1920), p. 340 (with 225 prints and photographs). Price $15.

[10] Raupert, Spiritistic Phenomena and their Interpretation (1920), pp. 15–17. For the latest experiments of Geley, Schrenck-Notzing and others in London, Paris or elsewhere, see the "Journal" of the A. S. P. R. for Aug., 1922, pp. 418–420. Also the "Revue Metapsychique" for March–April (Paris, 1922), on "The London S. P. R. 's Ectoplasm Experiments with Eva C.," in which 11 sittings were successful in the production of human hands and faces by subconscious ideoplastic power, bringing professional and photographic evidence up to the minute. The sittings in Paris are still in progress. Conan Doyle's 'phantoms' have never been critically tested.

[11] S. P. R. Proceedings, Vol. XXIV, pp. 86–142. [12] Lodge, 'Raymond,' pp. 200, 230ff.

These or similar ejaculations may be culled from many a sitting, and they remind us at first sight of the celebrated sphere-messages of Dante.[13]

Materialised forms have been known to come out with the choicest diction: "*God bless you, my dear—My work is done—I must now leave you,*"—platitudes attributed to the supposed 'Katie' at the Crookes performances.[14] Indeed, Professor Lombroso must have passed through some rather pathetic moments when, during the Palladino trances, his own 'mother' appeared at least twenty times, and, kissing his head and his lips, uttered those very human but thrilling words:—"*My son! My treasure!*"[15]

Space would fail us to chronicle the numerous modern experiences of a similar nature. Suffice it to say, that, while many a scoundrel has doubtless 'played the ghost' to a gullible audience and drained their pocket-books, the more serious phenomena are now scarcely called into question *as such*, but only as the actual, veridical embodiments of what they pretend to stand for. Indeed, Mr. Raupert is probably right in asserting that those who deny their occurrence are in need of "a surgical operation on the brain." As bare manifestations they are no longer questionable.

But what have we to oppose to the facts, and are we prepared to deny outright that they have any objective or evidential value?

Our answer is, that we have nothing to oppose to them in the line of morbid experiences except by way of warning, while we unconditionally disallow that the supposed revelations are to be taken at their face value, without the most careful and critical sifting. This is only to assume the attitude of scientific suspense. From the days of Simon Magus, the Church has never denied the possible reality of such happenings, and the only question that still cries for a solution concerns their origin. What do they mean? While many are inclined to see the 'black hand' in every form or figure of the occult, the most cautious Catholic opinion would brand the phenomena as mentally and morally deleterious, but as physically genuine prodigies operated partly by natural, partly by preternatural or demoniacal agency. In this way a loophole is left for their possibly natural explanation on the basis of subconscious multiple personalities; while if they defy analysis from every quarter, some preternatural influence will have to be assumed, and that an evil one. They speak too much of moral flippancy and frivolity, not to give evidence of the cloven foot.[16]

At the same time it must be admitted that while such practices have ever been severely under the ban, the recall of the dead by trance-methods cannot be called intrinsically or metaphysically impossible, having been divinely permitted on at least one occasion. I refer of course to the woman of Endor, conjuring up the spirit of the prophet Samuel at the bidding of King Saul:

Contra:

"*I saw gods ascending out of the earth . . . an old man cometh up . . . and he is covered with a mantle.*" . . . "*And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and Samuel said to Saul: 'Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?' . . . And Saul answered: 'I am sore distressed, for the Lord is departed from me.'*"[17]

Granting that we are here in presence of something exceptional,—a special supernatural interference,—this classic example shows at least that the Lord our God *may* work through mediumistic channels, that, as the Divine Will may be revealed in dreams, so it may be revealed in the trance-state.[18]

Here is what the Angelic Doctor has to say on the subject:

---

[13] Paradiso, passim. [14] Crookes, op. cit., supra, p. 102ff.

[15] Lombroso, apud Raupert, op. cit., p. 59.

[16] Raupert, l. c., p. 43ff. Compare Tanquerey, Synops. Theol. Dogm., I, pp. 319–326; Theol. Moral., II, pp. 533–541. [17] I Kings (I Samuel), 28, 13–15.

[18] Compare Benedict XIV, Heroic Virtue, III, p. 288–289, who admits that the soul of Samuel himself appeared, though it is a question how far it was conjured up by the woman's 'enchantments,' most theologians favoring the view that the soul appeared *before* the enchantments.

"That the dead appear to the living in any way whatever is either by the special dispensation of God, in order that the souls of the dead may interfere in the affairs of the living,—and this is to be accounted miraculous; or else such apparitions occur through the instrumentality of good or bad angels, without the knowledge of the departed, as may likewise happen when the living appear, without their own knowledge, to others living, as Augustine says in his book, *De Cura Mortuorum*, c. XIII. And so it may be said of Samuel, that he appeared through a Divine revelation, according to the words of Ecclesiasticus, 46, 23: "*He slept and told the king the end of his life*"; or else, the apparition was procured by the demons, unless indeed the authority of Ecclesiasticus be set aside through not being received by the Jews as canonical scripture."[19]

The *facts* are therefore admitted, while the large variety of interpretations shows what a wide margin of opinion is left to those who suspend their judgment on the ultimate nature and origin of some of these phenomena.

This, however, lends no sanction whatever to the indiscriminate calling up of the dead, real or pretended, as some of our modern necromancers would argue. The very fact that Saul was reproved by the wizard woman for having "deceived" her by allowing the "familiar spirits" to appear, is a proof positive that the practice was formally interdicted, being analogous to the case of Hosea's wife "gotten by fornication."[20] It was severely censured by the law of Moses. Under the New Law it was still more rigidly excluded. There is not a single case in the gospels, nor in the lives of the saints, of any priest or prophet, least of all the Savior Himself, having ever resorted to such a practice.

If then we are challenged to duplicate the wonders of the séance-room, we are happy to say that we *can* duplicate them, but have no desire to compete with gymnastic performances which are so dangerous and injurious to mind and body alike. Insanity and epilepsy have too often followed in their wake. From these grovelling and gruesome exhibitions of the cold and clammy we point with pride to those consoling visions and voices of the world of light, which, beginning with the theophanies of Paradise, find their climax in the Transfiguration of the Savior and the Translucidation of the Saints. The supereminent Christ of St. Paul and the Johannine visions has, needless to say, nothing to do with mediums, nor the Virgin of Lourdes or Czentochova with the ghastly nightmares of the ectoplasm.

"*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*" "*I am the Immaculate Conception.*"

Moreover, the divine trance is spontaneous and is given only for the most lofty moral and religious purpose, never as a mere curiosity:

"*After the consecration a brilliant light emanated from the Sacred Host, and the priest in the midst of the light seemed to shine as a most clear sun.*"[21] "*Thou art to serve me in an order, whose ancient perfection thou shalt help to bring back.*"[22]

To compare these heaven-imparted sights and admonitions with the frivolous, wordly and occasionally immoral performances of the projected 'double' is to confound a sublime symphony with a burlesque vaudeville.

In the meantime it would be safe to assert that if the mediumistic phenomena must claim our attention as prodigies and as dealing a crushing blow to the atomic materialism of the eighteenth century,—reversing indeed its entire conceptions of nature and life and proving beyond a doubt the super-atomic powers inherent in the soul of man,—their interpretation must always be open to grave suspicion and to an endless battle of opinions. If subconscious impersonation is a fact which will cover all cases, the matter is dismissed; they are surreptitious productions of the lower self. If actual obsessions by alien personalities, we are in a still more desperate plight; for the self is practically extinguished and we have no revelation to testify, as in the case of Samuel–Saul, that the phantasms in question are what they claim to be. In either case the practice of 'evoking the dead' is gravely illicit to the faithful; and here we must leave the matter until further light on this intricate subject can be obtained.[23]

---

[19] St. Thomas, S. T., I, q. 89, art. 8, ad. 2. [20] Hosea, 1, 2. [21] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 147. [22] Idem, p. 28. [23] Sabetti-Barrett, Mor. Theol., no. 209, resp. 3.

(3) THE DISRUPTIVE SUBNATURAL

It is possible, however, to sink into a still lower world of psychical manifestations. When the phenomena defy explanation by any natural hypothesis and are evidenced by symptoms which are subversive of all law and order in the moral line, we are no longer moving in debatable territory; they are less susceptible of ambiguous interpretations.

For these conditions we make no hesitation in saying that many of the class of portents above described are of a disorderly and directly demoniacal origin, being frequently the cause of mental aberrations and moral obliquities of the most fundamental and far-reaching character.

When the subject exhibits nervous contortions and bodily convolutions of a highly questionable nature; when she utters demonstrable falsehoods and comes out with foul and blasphemous language, we may be quite sure that we are in direct league with the powers of evil. Such exhibitions are not only deleterious; they are damnable. They may be well described as belonging to the region of the 'sub-natural,' being *under* the established constitution of things, the right order of nature.

HYSTERICAL AND CATALEPTIC STATES

This loss of the last ramparts of mental balance is generally known as 'hysteria'; and if it runs as far as to deprive the subject of the use of his senses, it is described as 'catalepsy,'—a condition of rigidity, in which the body is to all intents and purposes dead,—the state of lethargy.

Here again there is a physiological sense in which these abnormal conditions are wholly natural, being no more than diseases of our psychophysical organism. A nervous prostration, induced by physical agencies, must be credited with having physical antecedents. Nevertheless, they are such frequent accessories of the profound trance, with its baffling exhibitions of the contra-physical, that, when viewed in the light of the total complexity of the phenomena, they begin to wear a preternatural aspect; they become the symptoms, to say the least, of some kind of demoniacal influence, even if they do not necessitate an actual demonic control.

Examples of this are abundant in the records of the occult. Although it would be puerile to insinuate that every nervous collapse, every apparent convulsion, every symptom of anaesthesia, is to be unconditionally assigned to the 'devil,' it is rather remarkable that the most sensational feats of the mediums are apt to be coupled with a more or less complete suppression of every sane and healthy instinct, the few exceptions being doubtless due to elaborate medical precautions taken before or during the trance. As a fact, that most famous physical medium of modern times, Eusapia Palladino, was precisely the one most afflicted with advanced stages of delirium and addicted to decidedly shady moral practices.

"*She falls into true convulsions . . . she cries out like a woman who is lying in . . . she is overcome by hallucinations and by delirium.*"[24] "*I have a feeling of numbness . . . my arms and my body seem to stiffen and shake . . . all the next day I must take a rest,*" and so on.[25]

Besides being caught in the most flagrant frauds when the promised phenomena failed to materialise, this poor creature was exposed to such callous and criminal surroundings that, in view of such enormous mental and bodily handicaps, she could hardly be expected to remain untarnished. Vulgarities of the baser sort are said to have been rarely absent from her sittings. Nor is this confined to a single unfortunate instance.

"*As a rule,*" says Sir William Barrett, "*I have observed the steady downward course of mediums who sit regularly.*"[26]

---

[24] Lombroso, "After Death, What?" apud Raupert, l. c., p. 19.
[25] Eusapia Palladino, "My own Story," apud Raupert, l. c., pp. 21–23.
[26] Barrett, op. cit., p. 261.

This writer sums up the situation with considerable fairness:

"For my own part it seems not improbable that the bulk, if not the whole of the physical manifestations witnessed in a spiritualistic séance are the product of human-like, but not really human intelligences,—good or bad daimonia, they may be,—which aggregate around the medium, as a rule drawn from that particular plane of mental and moral development in the unseen which corresponds to the mental and moral development of the medium."[27]

Of course, it is possible for us to make too much of this negative side of the question; and to insinuate, as is sometimes done, that all mediums are frauds, humbugs and moral monsters, can do no good to the cause of impartial truth. The contrary is proved by the existence of perfectly sane, healthy and apparently honest subjects, whether in Munich or Paris, London, Dublin or Belfast.[28] But the signs of mental and moral degeneracy, however veiled, are in most cases sufficiently prominent and well-attested to warrant a decidedly unfavorable judgment on the ultimate 'character' of these benighted soothsayers.

HYSTERIC VISION—HYSTERIC LOCUTION

This is brought out by further psychological symptoms which are commonly associated with the induced trance. For when the vital organism becomes so disordered that the visions and voices are taken to be external when they have no objective basis, they become what are called 'hallucinations,' that is, deceptions due to a diseased state of the faculties. They resemble the ravings of the *delirium tremens* and may be brought on artificially, and very often by resorting to mediumistic practices.

"I see a snake . . . I hear a hiss . . . I feel a slimy skin . . . I grasp it."

Such or similar exclamations are common enough with entranced subjects when the sitters can testify in a body that no such things are externally taking place; they are rank delusions. Moreover, in cases of collective hallucination,—when the audience itself is partially hypnotised,—photographic and phonographic tests have revealed conclusively that no such agencies were then at work.

These are admittedly rare conditions of the nervous system, and we may be thankful enough that they do not as a rule occur in a lifetime. How easily they lend themselves to the delusive machinations of the 'father of lies,'—more especially when they put on a pious air or a preternatural appearance,—seems almost superfluous to point out.

"I see the Savior . . . I feel His hand . . . I hear the voice of angels," and so on.

A large number of 'divine visitations' and 'heavenly communications' are doubtless attributable to this source, and ascetical writers wisely caution us against their enticing snares:

Contra:

"These delusions are very great and very difficult of detection. For the devil, by way of suggestion, is able to represent much intellectual knowledge to the soul by the use of the bodily senses and is able to establish that knowledge so firmly as to make it appear true; and if that soul be not humble and cautious, he will no doubt cause it to believe an infinity of lies."[30]

In all these cases the fruits of the vision reveal the unhealthy nature of the tree from which they are plucked. The genuine mystic does not see or handle things so readily; and when he does, he makes doubly sure that he is not under the spell of an auto-intoxication, and he never boasts about them:

> *"God showed great things to me, a sinner, and that in such majesty that I am unable to proceed."*[31]

Humility, sanity and authenticity are apt to be found together, and the spasms of hysteria cannot touch the silence of the suspended trance.

---

[27] Idem, p. 113.

[28] See, for instance, Schrenck-Notzing, Geley and Crawford, op. cit., supra, on the apparently 'normal' character of their subjects; yet they are apt to be neurotic, or at least weak-willed persons.

[30] Ascent, II, 26, 16. [31] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 148.

(4) THE DEMONIC PRETERNATURAL

When, finally, the human organism sinks to such a state of passivity that the self is apparently obliterated and a ghastly visitor takes its place, making it speak and act as a dangerously malicious and grossly degenerate personality, we have cut the last strings that bind us to the realm of natural insanity. We are moving in the underworld of swooning faces and blaspheming voices; it is Satan's own empire. We have called it the region of the sub-preternatural, being *under* and *against* the entire dispensation of nature.

SATANIC INVASION—DEMONIC POSSESSION

"What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"[1]

This has ever served as the clearest gospel-example of a diabolic invasion sufficiently drastic to merit the name of a 'possession,' a complete mastery of the ego and a subversion of its faculties, normal or otherwise. It is the saddest plight to which any child of man can well be reduced, as he becomes the bearer of an alien personality which, in view of its shocking manifestations, is nothing less than the arch-enemy of mankind or one of his emmissaries. *"My name is Legion!"*

To substantiate this claim by formidable arguments would require more paragraphs than we are prepared to sacrifice. Let it be allowed that many a fainting-spell has passed for a falling sickness of the graver kind and that much nonsense has been talked in the name of demoniacal agency when no such agency was apparently called for, there still remain those more glaring cases of alienistic superposition of consciousness in which the patient comes out with such scurrilous, vampid and soul-destroying diction that, in view of his additional exhibitions of the marvellous in the form of lucidity, locomotor energy and the like, it seems impossible to exclude the intrusion of a separate, a powerful and a preternatural personality. There must be some proportion between cause and effect.

"We know thee who thou art, the holy one of God."[2]

Could anything less than Satan himself inspire such a dastardly outburst of rage and hatred in face of the Saviour of mankind? And will any ordinary, even 'multipoliginal' psychology explain its no less forcible exhibitions of apparently preternatural information in spite of a complete wreck and ruin of the cerebral organism? Yet similar manifestations are by no means wanting in the records of the unholy art.

DIABOLIC VISION—POLTERGEIST

"He retreated to the sofa and appeared to be fighting violently with some unpleasant influence. He made the Sign of the Cross, then extended his fingers towards the door, as though to exorcise it; finally he burst into a scornful, mocking peal of laughter that lasted for several minutes. As it concluded, a diabolical expression came over his face. He clenched his hands, gnashed his teeth, and commenced to grope in a crouching position towards the door."[3]

If this is not a close counterpart to the gospel narrative, with its swooning fits and its forced confession of the "cross," it furnishes at least an interesting example of an alienistic and suspiciously demonic control. At other times the prince of darkness will make no secret of his intrusions and his willing instrument seems to see and feel him at close quarters. The following reports would certainly suggest it:

"'I know you are a devil.' The pencil was gripped in my hand with superhuman force and I could not unloose my hand. It wrote the most vile language and the most terrible curses. It was just a thunderstorm of hatred and obscenity."[4]

---

[1] Matt. 8, 29; Mark 5, 7; Luke 8, 28. [2] Mark 1, 24.
[3] The 'Eglington Control,' apud Raupert, op. cit., p. 44. [4] Ibid., p. 46.

"Oh, Dr. Prince, save me from myself, and from whatever it is that is absolutely merciless! I can bear anything but this mocking devil."[5]

Add to this the phenomena of strepitation and levitation, of raps, somersaults and the movements of furniture, of pullings, quizzings and ridiculous ticklings,—all of which have been known to accompany these orgies on various occasions,—and it seems safe to conclude with Sir William Barrett, Dr. McDougall and others that *"occasionally a human body may be the seat of a real invasion from the spirit-world, a case of obsession."*[6]

To talk of 'alternations of personality' carries us no nearer to the ultimate causes of things. A description is not a solution. While there must always be some doubt and hesitancy in accepting many of these cases as decisive, their combined import must surely carry considerable weight.[7]

And with this revindication of the ancient idea of obsession,—the transfer of a malicious personality from one subject to another,—the driving of the demons into the swine of Gadara becomes once more intelligible, though it must always remain mysterious. *"Go!" "Hold thy peace!" "Come out of him!"* Such imperious language, however accommodating, can hardly apply to an ordinary nervous disorder, however violent; and the disorder itself defies as a rule all physical or natural remedies. *"These are not cast out except by prayer and fasting."*[8] In this we see the one canonical remedy by which the more or less tentative cures of the neuropathic experts are effectually supplemented, if not supplanted.

It is not for us to say how far such a power might be granted to any modern revivalist, who with clean hands and unsullied heart, and perhaps unconsciously, drives out the demons in the Name of the Great Exorcist. The ways of Divinity must always remain elusive, and many a mysterious cure which has passed for a 'mind-healing' may, no doubt, be traced to a personal intervention of the Divine Healer. Hypnotism alone has never been known to effect it, and hydropathic treatment has run its course.[9]

But if we must allow the finger of God to operate in many secret and unsuspected quarters, the *instant* cure of demoniacs *without* treatment has ever been the strongest card in the hands of saints and seers since the days of Pentecost. It cannot easily be duplicated by any form of Emmanuelism or Christian Science, if, indeed, these can show the remotest parallels.

Contra:

"I send you Father John of the Cross, to whom God has given the grace to drive evil spirits away. He has now, here in Avila, put to flight three legions of devils, whom in the name of God he commanded to tell their number, and he was obeyed on the instant."[10]

This testimony of St. Teresa to the sudden cure of a possessed nun is all the more valuable because it does not stand alone. Her great colleague bears additional witness to his own exorcisms on several other occasions, as when he restored a violent paranoiac to his sober senses with the words:

> *"Now the Lord hath given us victory over this enemy. There is nothing to fear."*[11]

That these were genuine cases of obsession, not mere insanity, can hardly be doubted. They were accompanied by swoons, blasphemies and bodily contortions,—decisive symptoms. Similar expulsions have been effected by holy persons in every age or clime, and almost invariably at the mere word or beckoning of the saintly operator. Can the profane practitioner show us anything exactly like it? Will a pass of the hands drive out epilepsy?

Listen to the words of Dr. Prince, a very impartial writer:

---

[5] The 'Sally-Beauchamp Control,' apud Barrett, op. cit., p. 137. [6] Ibid, p. 137–138.

[7] Compare Joire, Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena, pp. 92–101, on the "Poltergeist," who calls attention to its incoherence, its violence and its clumsiness, and who suggests at least a demoniacal intervention. [8] Matt. 17, 20. [9] Supra, p. 20. [10] Heriz, op. cit., pp. 78–79.

[11] Ibid., pp. 136–137.

"Spirit possession is familiar to us from the New Testament, and those who accept it as a fact there cannot be certain that it is never existent now. Has not the Catholic Church, in days past, carried out exorcisms? Some modern cases tend to support the New Testament affirmations about obsessing spirits. And if there are such cases, the priestly exorcisms might reasonably succeed, whether by erecting barriers in the minds of the victims or by actually awing the obtruding personalities."[12]

Of course, we cannot prove an actual "possession" by purely physical criteria. It is a metapsychical ailment. But we can point to a sufficiently strong convergence of facts and phenomena to warrant the conclusion that a dislocation of the ego is taking place of such an exceptional kind that it cannot be righted by any natural remedies so far known to us. Blackwell's Island is still swarming with its raving 'demons'; and the only cures that have ever been reported from that sad asylum seem to have been operated by religious persons. This should count for something in the ultimate diagnosis of this unfathomable malady.[13]

A GENERAL ESTIMATE

We see, then, that the subliminal order,—the world *below* our normal consciousness,—is by no means homogeneous or uniform, but admits of indefinite gradations, ranging from a moderate passivity to a complete loss of the power of self-possession. We have followed the downward steps in approximately four stages,—dream-vision, trance-vision, hysteric vision, demonic vision,—and these, with their corresponding auditory and motor phenomena, constitute four distinct leaps into the underworld, expressed by the subnormal, the subconscious, the subnatural and the sub-preternatural. Of these the first is largely within the compass of regular law; the second is more plastic and pliable to extra-terrene influences; the third is definitely below the constituted order of things; while the fourth boldly transcends and opposes the scheme of the universe. In so far as these are conversant with different states of mentality, they may be labelled 'sub-conscious phenomena'; but in so far as they tend to destroy that mentality or to substitute a pseudo-mentality, the term is not strong enough, and we require to mark off the lower regions with still more incisive epithets, the lowest of all being the exclusive dominion of the evil one. From natural death to demonic possession there is surely a vast avenue of intermediate experience which cannot afford to pass over.[14]

At the same time we find it impossible to brand the entire region as replete with satanism or satanic deception. The invasion of the subconscious by superconscious, nay by even supernatural forms of lucidity shows that the two orders *interpenetrate*, and Christ's descent into hell is an everlasting reminder that no portion of the land of darkness is beyond redemption, unless it be the Gehenna of the damned. The united realm of being belongs to the Creator. And this is all the more reason why we should walk with the greatest caution and critical circumspection when we are exploring a world which is furrowed with such frightful chasms and dangerously yawning precipices. *Facilis descensus averni!*

---

[12] Walter F. Prince, An Investigation of Poltergeist and other Phenomena near Antigonish, Journal, A. S. P. R., Vol. XVI (August, 1922), p. 435. The author speaks of working among "Scotch Roman Catholics, a kindly, orderly and generally upright people"; also of having met "several of the scholastic and ecclesiastical leaders who showed an enlightened and friendly interest in the undertaking" (Ibid., p. 422). See also "Haunted Houses and Exorcism," in the Occult Review for August (London, 1922).

[13] We cannot always verify these alleged expulsions by priestly power, as they are for the most part of a private and confidential nature; but, evidence has come into our hands that *some* of them are genuine exorcisms operated by the *exsufflatio*. They have been attested by living medical witnesses. See Catholic Encyclopaedia, art. "Demoniacs"; and compare Dr. William Menzies Alexander, Demonic Possession in the New Testament: Its relations, historical, medical and theological (Edinburgh, 1902). Also Benedict XIV, Heroic Virtue, II, pp. 29–31; Devine, Mystical Theology, pp. 316–322; for the symptoms.

[14] Raupert's publications entitled "The New Black Magic," "Hell and its Problems," furnish strong, but questionable ammunition. Has enough allowance been made for the neutral and non-moral character of the more natural phenomena? Contra: Liljencrants, "Spiritism and Religion," p. 268ff. At any rate, the former *proves* the existence of the demonic world and paints it in lurid and lecherous colors,—for which all praise!

III. THE ASCENT TO THE SUPERCONSCIOUS

Let us now turn our attention to a different line of facts and watch the gradual unfolding of a world of light and blessedness which is above the threshold of our normal state and lifts us serenely into God's own fatherland. Here also there are degrees of elevation,—from a natural 'sensing' to a beatific 'seeing'—, and it will be interesting to make the ascent of that Holy Mountain which, so broad and easy at its base, becomes increasingly steep and slippery the nearer we approach the summit. "*Send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me; and let them bring me to thy Holy Hill.*"

(1) THE INTERVENING 'SUPERNORMAL'

LUCIDITY IN THE WAKING STATE

The distinctive feature of this 'upper' side of the universe is found in the refreshing fact that its mental flights and its physical wonders are not the outcome of an obscuration but of an illumination of the higher faculties, while the lower motions of the soul are held in check with greater or less success by a power which is evidently working against their obnoxious influences,—trying to stem them by an attraction of an opposite nature. Such an attraction is not always accomplished suddenly; it is in the first instance a simple groping or feeling out for a higher order of mentation than can be conveyed by the induced trance.

This begins as a rule with the well-known phenomena of mental telepathy or telekinesis by which things are apparently seen or moved *at a distance*, and this without any loss of supra-liminal consciousness. They leave the subject in the same condition as he was before, but give him a psychical experience which is rather out of the ordinary, hence super-normal.

The general principle of perceiving things not normally accessible to the five senses should hardly cause a greater surprise than the use of the telescope for discovering the 'infinitely' large or the microscope for unveiling the 'infinitely' small. It implies no more than a sharpening up of the senses by which the object is brought indefinitely nearer to the perceiving subject, either with or without external instruments.

The simplest form of this kind of telesthesia is what is known as 'body-sensing,' a vague feeling that something is present which turns out to be an actually correct impression of an external object. Such an experience is not always infallible nor rounded off to a nicety. It is in the first instance a 'conjectured image' giving but a remote clue to the nature of the thing presented.

DISTANT VISION . . . . DISTANT ACTION

As a purely physiological symptom, the possession of exceptional powers of sight or hearing does not carry us beyond the domain of molecular physics; it simply implies the possession of more delicate organs of perception. The eye sees, or the ear hears, what other people are unable to take in; their organs are not sufficiently sensitive. Such abnormal seeing or hearing, touching or smelling, would seem to be the special ornament of *primitive man*, though it may reveal itself at any age or stage of the human race. The sense of color and sound is rather more vivid among the nature-peoples, the power of perceiving distant objects being sometimes two or three times the normal. Moreover, the sense of orientation is often quite phenomenal, the sudden finding of a lost trail or the discovery of seemingly hidden objects being by no means unknown in the records of the prehistoric hunters. Given that some of these features, at least, are genuine, there are others of too vague and confused a character to merit the name of visions. They are better described as impressions, or indefinable sensations. In many of these conditions *nothing* is actually seen, but only psychically *felt;* and this dis-

tinguishes the conjectured image from the sharply defined phantasm which goes with the more advanced stages of psychical elevation.[1]

A more definite impression is said to be produced by the dowsing-rod, or the '*pendule explorateur*,' by which the hidden treasure is located with more promise of accuracy. Here a forked rod or a suspended ring is made to twist or swing to a particular point in space, giving some clue to whereabouts of metallic ores, springs or other desirable quests. It can even be made to incline to the different letters of the alphabet; and then we have the usual 'messages' which are largely the outcome of the dowser's own mentation and muscular effort. He thinks in a definite direction, and the 'needle' follows his thoughts; it is pure coercion. Nevertheless, it will probably have to be admitted that such 'pointings' give occasional evidence of a genuine power of diagnosis which would imply some faculty in the mind to reach out into more hidden recesses of the real, if not to slightly influence the motion of surrounding objects. When not done with malicious purpose, it may be a harmless amusement, though care must be taken to keep on an even keel and to ward off the condition of mental stupor.[2]

Similar remarks apply to the planchette and the ouija-board, though here the danger of occult agency of a baneful character is far more pronounced. Indeed, they are most effective when the operators are most passive and mentally inert; for which reason we consign them to the region of the subconscious, with all the warnings and prohibitions that are attached to that region. We wish to stimulate our waking faculties, not to suppress them. Chinese puzzles like "*Summer Lodge*"! cannot be said to interest us. That such is really the case is openly affirmed by one of the most prominent advocates of the 'talking table.' "*I ought to say that most certainly I am sure that no conscious effort was employed by anyone present.*"[3] And without 'effort' there is no *actus humanus;* it is a subliminal process.

But an actual picture of something beyond the range of the senses is more commonly claimed for the 'crystal-vision,' where distant or hidden objects are occasionally discried in more or less complete outline.

"*I cannot explain what I see. But he is clothed in a garment so bright that the sun which is shining on him dazzles me completely.*"[4]

Such a 'prismatic image' may be formed in the crystal or in any shining substance, and is said to give occasional evidence of genuine knowledge beyond the subject's normal power of acquisition. In this case the vision tells of a certain soldier who, though in the mind of a bystander, was seemingly unknown to the seer and described with the most perfect accuracy of detail, whether in the matter of form, raiment or habitual surroundings. Whatever the source of the information, it was apparently conveyed through the brilliant polyhedron. Similar feats are performed by primitive peoples in the wild state, who make use of the quartz-crystal or the 'stone of light,' sometimes of a smooth sheet of water, to ferret out the location of a disease or to fix the imperceptible.[5] Looking into the fire or into the fumes of burning incense will also induce a secondary image, which, though wholly phantastic, may be the channel of some rather unwonted or inaccessible information. Moreover, in all these cases there is apparently no breach in the full waking consciousness of the gazer. He is perfectly *compos mentis* and describes the vision with the same calmness and composure as if he was looking at the canals of Mars or the belts of Jupiter. Though much of the vision may be padded with memory-imprints or apparently forgotten recollections, Professor Joire assures us that "*in these particular instances the pictures seen in the crystal did not arise either from a subconscious recollection nor from a thought, more or less conscious, which gave*

---

[1] Compare the author's "Prehistoric Religion," Introduction, and pp. 323ff. Also "Creation versus Evolution" (Washington, 1920), pp. 13–20.

[2] Barrett, On the Threshold of the Unseen, pp. 321–323. [3] Lodge, 'Raymond,' p. 224.

[4] Joire, Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena, p. 161–162.

[5] Creation versus Evolution, p. 11–12; 18–20.

rise to an hallucination."[6] But if these elements are ruled out, there remains but one alternative. They must be traced to some kind of superconscious, or at least supernormal, faculty of mentation. Divine or diabolic agency need hardly be invoked.

When sounds or voices are heard, the pictures naturally acquire a more vital interest. They seem to talk and to describe distant scenes in a personal and life-like manner. In the case of the "shell-telephone,'—another instrument known to the primitive,—this natural trumpet is held up to the ear, and is said to reproduce these precarious voices with surprising realism. However this may be, there is here a vast field of visual and auditory phenomena which still awaits the exploration of the man of science.[7]

But it is possible to have the same experiences without shell, prism or plumb-line. When no artificial means are employed, we get what is called the 'open vision,' a mental impression which may have its source in material things or in some other mind. This is 'second sight' in the conventional sense of the word, as the seer focusses the object directly, which object is assimilated by the mind as it were without a camera, just as it presents itself to the visual organism. It is a direct 'psychic image.'

Here also there are gradations of intensity in the vision, ranging from a vague feeling of something ominous to a sharply defined mental picture.

> "*During Benediction I felt a blow at the heart (sic); I thought of your children, and looked for their mother to tell her to pray for them.*"[8]

"Here is a case," says Professor Joire, "in which we find *in the waking state* a premonition of the danger incurred by some young men in an accident. This premonition occurred, as we shall see, without vision, and without hallucination." It is not easy to say how far such an impression might be conveyed by some cerebral phantasm sympathetically produced in the mind of the receiver, or how far it is more of the nature of an 'anticipated' danger. But it is classed with many similar experiences of a supposedly natural kind; and there is no reason, as far as we can see, to question their veracity.

This is rendered increasingly plausible by the numerous instances in which a definite picture is apparently seen in every variety of time or circumstance. The "Phantasms of the Living," have now been fairly well sifted. Out of 1684 cases of 'hallucination' *in the normal waking state,* 350 were recognised apparitions of living persons, many of which were simultaneously experienced by a group of people, showing that there could be no question about their real occurrence.[9] Swedenborg's vision of Stockholm in flames may be duplicated by many modern examples of distant perception; and sometimes dim personalities will show themselves at unexpected moments and when the mind of the subject is in full working order.

> "*Bless! me Why, surely, that is your brother.*"[10]

The human figure immediately vanishes; but the mental impression is found to synchronise with some extraordinary event, and frequently with an impending death, danger or disaster. If all the apparitions connected with death be counted up and compared, they furnish, as we have seen, a proportion of 440 to 1 in favor of a logical nexus between the reality and the report. When definitely *after* death, they may truly be said to lend a powerful support to the doctrine of human immortality.

---

[6] Joire, op. cit., p. 172ff. Compare, however, St. John of the Cross, in The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 17, 9, who says, poetically of course, that "*the wisdom of God is His crystal,*" calling attention to Ps. 147, 17: "*He sendeth his crystals like morsels,*" evidently a similitude.

[7] Joire, op. cit., p. 175ff. [8] Joire, op. cit., p. 123.

[9] S. P. R. Proceedings, Vol. X, pp. 39, 246. Barrett, On the Threshold of the Unseen, p. 143–144. [10] Joire, l. c., p. 133.

"*There is no doubt whatever about the significance of this evidence. It points most unmistakably to individual survival. The self continues.*"[11]

These 'psychic' visions have nothing to do with mediums or table-turning, though why they are so flimsy and so few and far between is not easily determined. But that they are perfectly sane, healthy and normal, or rather supernormal experiences of honest, wide-awake 'sensitives,' can no longer be questioned.

Contra:

When, however, these experiences are related of holy persons or of moral and religious geniuses, we begin to suspect their infiltration from a directly superhuman source. Apart from the Savior's revelations of the hidden,—which are of course unique,—His followers have often been armed with such exceptional powers of distant vision as to necessitate a supernatural agency.

"*Go thy way. Thy son liveth!*"[12]

These instant and infallible intuitions of the God-Man are on rather a higher level than the partial and problematic gropings of the common visionary, though in their purely human aspect they reveal analogies with the telepathic process. To this extent they show that Christ was an *extraordinary seer*, and similar examples in the Lives of the Saints are too numerous to chronicle. At the very outset we are told that

"*Saul of Tarsus hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias.*"[13]

and this was probably a psychical impress, not an actual physical bilocation.[14] The same of the telesthetic marvels, real or alleged, of St. Thomas the Apostle, St. John Cupertino, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and countless others.[15] In so far as these are 'psychic' processes, they might come under the sway of telepathic forces; but in so far as they are corporal manifestations, combined with lucidity, they must be classed, as we shall see, with preternatural phenomena.

Cases of thought-transference, or mento-mental action, are now so firmly attested that little need be said to complete the picture. It is important to note, however, that these sympathetic vibrations between brain and brain are very elusive as to their causes and that they apparently never take place without conscious effort on the part of some agent. The privacy of the soul is inviolable until it is willfully sacrificed by the subject.[16] This would point to some kind of superconscious process more or less sealed to subliminal 'fishing.'

At their best, however, these artificial quizzings can never compare with that infallible power of disclosing the "secrets of hearts" which, whether with or without the consent of its object, penetrates into the most hidden recesses of the soul:

"*Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband.*"[17]

Will any ordinary mind-reading ferret out the past and private antecedents of a person with such unerring certainty? Its altogether exceptional character is brought to light by the instant reply of the Samaritan woman:

"*Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*"[18]

Such a direct and immediate insight into the 'interior castle' is baffling indeed, but has been known to be exhibited by saints and holy supernormals in so many instances that we can well credit its persistence in modern times.

---

[11] Barrett, l. c., p. 144ff. Lodge, The Survival of Man, p. 99–109. J. A. Hill, Psychical Investigations (1920), p. 242ff. and p. 291. This is not opposed to any received doctrine, as most theologians are agreed that "*all beings in heaven, hell, or purgatory, including those on this earth, may become the objects of corporal vision,*" though not by their *own* power. See Scaramelli, apud Voss, l. c., p. 355; Devine, Mystical Theology, p. 513. [12] John, 4, 50. [13] Acts, 9, 12.

[14] Compare D. W. Harris, Essays in Occultism, p. 78ff., who speaks of "dual personality," though not always accurately of "bilocation." [15] Harris, op. cit., pp. 47, 69, 77ff.

[16] Lodge, The Survival of Man, pp. 128–137. Geley, From the Unconscious to the Conscious, p. 95ff. Hyslop, Life after Death (1920), pp. 130–142. [17] John, 4, 18. [18] John, 4, 19.

As an example of distant vision combined with the power of soul-penetration we may turn again to the great mystic of Salamanca.

"*St. John was gifted with supernatural light to understand the consciences of his penitents. This was not limited by distance. From his convent in Granada he saw Mother Anna of St. Albert in Caravaca in greatest trouble on account of some scruples which tormented her.*"[19] Again: "*Child, why do you hide your sorrows? But as you are silent yourself, I will tell them,*"[20]—this from his own lips.

Moreover, we are assured in many places that such things really, though rarely, happen to those who are habitually moving in a higher mental plane:

"*Spiritual persons are able to see, though far away, what other men are doing. We have an instance of this in our holy father Elisha, who saw his servant Gehazi hide the gifts he had received from Naaman. 'Was not my heart present,' saith the prophet, 'when the man turned back from his chariot to meet thee?' Elisha saw in spirit the act, as if he had been present on the spot.*"[21] The same of thought-reading:

"*Those persons, whose minds are purified, ascertain with great facility, some better than others, what is passing in the hearts of men.*"[22]

Though he speaks of a "passive" illumination, apparently without effort, it is clear that such passivity is something vastly different from a soporific stupor, as the subject receives the impression *with greater distinctness* than the words involve, even when he knows not the language to which the words belong.[23] It is an "*active night*" in which an *intellectual stimulus* is given which if "*far more clear and subtle*" than a mere suggestion.[24] In fact, the recipient must take great care to ward off a soporific counterfeit. "*Watch ye, therefore, and pray; that ye enter not into temptation.*"[25]

Then, as to the moving or influencing things at a distance,—so-called 'telekinesis,'—we have the 'distant voice,' already considered, in which vibrations are apparently set up in surrounding objects, whether physically or physiologically. Mental audition without apparatus is not unknown.

"*I hear a man's voice close to my ears, saying: 'Take this, leave that!'*"[26]

Flippant and frivolous as many of these communications appear to be, it would be rash to deny their possible source from some living personal agent in view of the numerous reports of a similar character. Voices of the dead or dying might also belong to this group, some of which are said to have occurred *more* than a year after the decease.[27]

On the other hand, the physical movement of objects without contact and outside the trance-condition is exceedingly rare and not well authenticated. However, if we are to trust Dr. Crawford's experiments at Belfast, it would seem that raps, voices, impacts, table-turning and levitation may occasionally be produced by apparently normal agents in the fully conscious state, such motions being explained as 'cantilever action' of the 'ectenic force.'

"*Power!*" . . . "*It goes into the table, and we manipulate.*"[28]

Such is the only explanation to be wrung from the invisible operators if such are present; while the elaborate physical and psychometric tests incline us to look to some collective thought-transmission by means of the teleplasm as a sufficient cause of the phenomena. In any case, it seems certain that occasional mento-material action *does occur;* and to this extent it renders credible what was formerly looked upon as preposterous,—the motion of material things at the apparent bidding of the mind of man. Autoscopes and Autokinesis give the lie to the old-time neuro-mentalism, as they demonstrate the independent functioning of some *psychic* entity.

---

[19] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 135. [20] Heriz, p. 161.
[21] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 26, 14. [22] Ibid., II, 26, 13. [23] Ibid., II, 26, 15.
[24] Ibid., II, 24, 4. [25] Matt., 26, 41. [26] Joire, op. cit., p. 175ff.
[27] Barrett, op. cit., p. 143ff. and supra, pp. 20, 36.
[28] Crawford, The Reality of Psychic Phenomena (1918), p. 237. Lodge, Raymond, p. 151.

Contra:

But how thin, vampid and ephemeral all this appears when we turn to the records of the holy seers. The floating axe and the retreating sun-dial pave the way for the still more drastic prodigies of the Son of God:

"If any man hear my voice, I will come in unto him."[29]

The voice of Jesus finds an echo only in the humble heart, and to many, as to Peter, Paul and John, it has clothed itself in human diction. But more than this; the Savior sends out mysterious forces into a world of despairing darkness:

"Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me."[30]

The instant passage of the healing force into the bloody issue demands a more than natural thought-propulsion, while other marvels transcend the records of the distant action; they speak of a universal force-transmission:

"Peace! Be still!" "Thou shalt find a piece of money in the fish's mouth."
"And the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom."[31]

Can the command over winds and waters and temple-curtains, nay, even the removing of mountains, be equated by a mere pulling of tables or simple apport? Why sneer at the wonders of Gregory Thaumaturgus, when far less holy operators can send chairs and trumpets buzzing through the air? *Can* they?

However doubtful some of these saintly marvels may seem to the hard-shell-Huxleyist, they are supported in part by the occult phenomena and confirmed by a continuous chain of similar prodigies down to our own times.

"He made the sign of the cross four times towards the four quarters of the heavens. At once the clouds departed and no sign of the storm remained."[32]

The mantle of Elias still divides the waters, no less than his sacred staff.

"With respect to all these, spiritual men are occasionally liable to representations and objects, set before them in a supernatural way."[33]

On the other hand, their *partial* reproduction by natural means need no longer be questioned, and modern theologians are inclined to see in the 'supernormal' a stepping stone to better things and the refutation of a crass materialism. One of our clearest writers makes the following useful summary of the matter:

"There are some *extraordinary* phenomena which nowadays are quite commonly held to be natural, or at least *can* be held as such, and are therefore licit from what we have already said on the subject:

(*a*) Thus, it is impossible to condemn the use of the *divining-rod* for the discovery of waters or certain metals; for the motion of this rod is plausibly explained by some kind of influx, either of the water or of the metal.

(*b*) Sometimes in the *sleeping* and sometimes in the *waking state*, certain hidden things are made manifest, either by God, or, in a natural manner, by what they call *telepathy*."[34] Practical directions are then given:

(*a*) "When it is a question of *merely physical* phenomena, such as the rotation of tables, percussions, or the various motions of *levitation*, they are not to be attributed to a preternatural agent unless it is morally certain, from the various circumstances, that they evidently contradict the laws of nature. For many nowadays hold with some probability that there is in the human body, especially in that of highly nervous persons, a certain fluid, analogous to the magnetic or electric fluid, which can be projected externally and flow into surrounding objects, either by immediate contact or by mediate contact transmitted through the *ether;* and thus hypothetically at least, can be explained the raps and movements of turning tables.

---

[29] Apoc., 3, 20. [30] Luke, 8, 46. [31] Matt., 8, 26; Mark, 4, 39; Matt., 17, 26; 27, 51.
[32] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 178. [33] The Ascent of Mount Carmel. II, 11, 1.
[34] Tanquerey, Synops. Theol. Moral., II, no. 905.

(*b*) The same may be said of *intellectual phenomena*, which *do not transcend* the *intellectual powers* of the bystanders nor of the medium; for if answers are given under the influx of the *medium*, they surely do not come from the table itself, nor necessarily from a supernatural agent, but solely from the mind itself of the person who, by the fluid power emitted by him, directs the motion of the table."

"In a contrary sense, however, if the phenomena denote a knowledge of things which exceed the capacities either of the *medium* or of the *bystanders*, they are to be attributed to a supernatural agent. Such are, according to the *Roman Ritual*, 'to speak in an *unknown tongue* with numerous words, or to understand the speaker; to uncover *distant* and *hidden* things; to manifest *powers above the age or condition of nature*, and other things of the same kind which, the more they concur, the greater the signs they furnish.

As to speaking in *unknown tongues*, it is not enough to recite a few words in a state of feverish excitement which were formerly heard, but it is required that indubitable evidence be given that a man suddenly learnt and understood a language which he had positively never heard of.

As to the *distant* and *occult*, it is not sufficient to simply conjecture them, or even to see something in a certain state of *hyperesthesia*. For some of the facts of *telepathy* or *clairvoyance*, which occur passingly in a state of hyperesthesia, (that is of abnormal sensibility), are not altogether certain signs of supernatural intervention.

But if things are distinctly manifested which can only be known by revelation or inspiration, such as the secrets of hearts and future events, and this not with conjecture but with certainty, they must be attributed to a supernatural agency."[35]

This carefully worded opinion will probably be followed by those who are best acquainted with the facts. It leaves abundant room for the workings of the natural supernormal, while it does not pretend to fix the boundaries of the two kingdoms with unerring certainty. It is always possible that an apparently natural effect may as a fact be supernatural, and *vice versa;* nor is the former always demoniacal, nor the latter unconditionally divine. The natural seer may here and there be in league with the powers of heaven, while the supernatural visionary may receive some of the impressions from an earthly source. He is living in a double world.

Nevertheless the main principle seems clear enough. We must allow an intervening order of supernormal phenomena which is theologically neutral, but which can be made to swing in an upper or lower direction according to the moral intention that is put into the act. Upon this is built a higher order of manifestations which interpenetrates, but is marked off from the lower phenomena with sufficient sharpness to be generally recognised. It includes the reading of hearts, the instant command over the forces of nature and the certain prediction of future events. These reveal analogies with the telepathic process, but not identities. They are much too subtle and far-sweeping to be put down as distant 'feelers.'

In practice, therefore, the use of lower instruments for piercing into the unseen is like employing a clumsy microscope in place of the X-ray flash. The telegraph and the telephone have superseded the old message-stick, and these again are gravely threatened by the 'wireless.' We can dispense, in fact, with all instruments of whatever kind, though fortunately we no longer speak, as the Indian does, of telephones as "possessed with the devil." A superior faculty does not put an inferior one "in hell." At the same time, a careless playing with these powers is

---

[35] Idem., II, nos. 912–913 (translation from the Latin text; italics are in the original.) Compare also "The New Thought Entourage," by Herbert Thurston, S. J., in the London "Month," (Jan., 1918), p. 58ff. Then "Rationalism v. Telepathy," by the same writer (ibid., Feb., 1918), who concludes that "*excellent arguments against materialism may be deduced from the recognition of telepathy*" (p. 164). Also an article on "Telekinesis" by the same (June, 1919), p. 401ff. Finally, Dr. Johan Liljencrants, Spiritism and Religion (Washington, 1918), p. 197–211, on natural telepathy, telaesthesia and clairvoyance, both subliminal and supraliminal.

never without danger, as a morally indifferent act can easily be turned into sour channels. The use of autoscopes, though *valid*, is not always *licit;* and for us this tampering with crystals and crooked sticks is best left severely alone. We are in no need of shell-trumpets or 'second sight' when we can get the direct message by less doubtful means. And this is what we must now consider in its workings on a superior plane.

(2) THE HIGHER SUPERCONSCIOUS

When impressions are received that are more than passing lucidities or transitory lights, but reveal a clear and continuous 'lifting' of the faculties by which hidden things are unveiled with more or less *certainty*, we enter the region of the 'prophetical' in the wider sense,—an unbroken chain of higher experiences which give evidence of a more permanent and profound illumination from the superworld.

In the occult parlance of the day, these are often described as 'clairvoyance' and 'clairaudience,' a supposedly 'clear' seeing or hearing of what is otherwise concealed from the mortal senses or the mind of man. And in so far as this is a generic term to express some kind of super-lucidity, it may be conveniently, though cautiously, applied to everything in the line of a superior psychical experience.

But, as we shall presently see, this nomenclature is too loose and elastic to be flung helter skelter upon every form of higher illumination; and, as in the case of the more common telepathy, we must discern gradations and distinguish between what might be partially achieved by natural means and what must be unconditionally assigned to a supernatural motion. Between the veridical vampings of the Delphic Oracle and the inspired utterances of the Prophetical Schools there exists a difference, not only of degree, but of kind; and we would be blind indeed if we could not recognise such a difference.

However, it will probably be allowed that we are within our rights in employing the term 'superconscious' in a general way to all those states of our higher, waking mentality in which illuminations are received through the upper part of the soul which are beyond the reach of its every-day powers and beyond the fleeting impressions of the moment, be they of a natural or of a supernatural character.

In the first case we are simply dealing with the *intellectus agens* in so far as it assimilates a mysterious order of knowledge by way of a permanent *habit*, not a transitory impulse. This forms part of our natural, however exceptional, mental equipment, as there are undoubted states of higher mental lucidity which fall short of complete or integral perspicuity.

In the second case we are dealing with that same intellect in so far as it manipulates a power which can in no wise be covered by a hazy problemizing, but speaks to us with inerrant, nay with infallible accents. It comes directly from the Father of Lights, without any earthly screening in the shape of doubt, dissidence or other deficiency.

DIRECT VISION . . . . DIRECT VOICE
SIMPLE FORM-PROJECTION

If we divide the subject on the basis of sight and hearing in the widest sense of the words, this will suggest what is commonly understood by revelation and inspiration. By the former the prophet *sees* the hidden truth; by the latter he *hears* it and commits it to writing.

Now if there is one thing that theologians of all schools are agreed upon, it is that divine illuminations of whatever kind are rarely, if ever, on the identical level but exhibit marked, in some cases radical, degrees of diversity in their lucidity and their inspirational value. Revelations may be apocryphal, deuterocanonical, protocanonical, or super-canonical, according to the degree in which they come from the Divine Source of Light and are then committed to writing by the special faculty of inspiration. Moreover, 'prophecy' does not always connote a relation to the future nor are its bearers necessarily the chosen people or the redeemed in

Christ. It is in the first instance a divine enlightenment which assimilates all forms of knowledge and may be given to Jew or Gentile, saint or sinner alike. Benedict XIV explicitly declares that the gift may be in the hands of "*angels, devils, men, women, children, heathens or gentiles,*" and the contents of the message may be partly of natural, partly of supernatural character. This implies an ascent from the vague and partial to the distinct and plenary.[1]

OBSCURE ORACLE . . . . UNDEFINED

The word 'clairvoyance,' according to Barrett, has been used to denote "the transcendental vision of beings on another plane of existence."[2] Such grandiloquent language can hardly apply to those pathetic gropings for a higher light that distinguish so much that goes by the name of 'hidden revelation.' However, it is commonly believed that the Sibylline Oracles, when not interpolated by Christian hands, do embody much that might have been dimly focussed by Jewish or even Pagan visionaries concerning some 'triune' manifestation of Deity or the life and character of the Expected One.

"*The king yet lives that Ceasar shall dethrone.*"
"*Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior.*"

Ambiguity and double diction are always a prominent feature among the sibyls, while the mystical acrostics on the name of Christ, the Divine "Fish," are none the less inspiring because hiddenly seen and felt by His own followers. In each case something is intued which is more than a fleeting shibboleth. It is an 'Obscure Oracle' which gives evidence of the power of *partial* prophecy.[3]

And in modern times we are offered many examples of supposed 'clear-vision' of a similar kind, though how to verify them in particular cases is just the crucial problem. 'Spirit Teachings' are too much mixed up with fraud and falsity to be for a moment considered in this place. Moreover, they are largely self-suggested and reducible to a single formula:

"*Believe in what thou canst not see, until the vision comes to thee.*"[4]

But visions and voices may give occasional evidence of being neither subjective nor spiritistic, but genuine impressions received from a living source.

"*There is a stranger . . . He is looking me full in the face . . . He is writing on a piece of slate . . . . 'Steer to the North-West!'*"[5]

This well-known episode in the life of Sir Robert Bruce, in which he saw the apparent 'double' of a distant man in his wide-awake senses, who sat in his armchair wrote on a slate and then immediately vanished, leaving the words as a warning of a gravely impending danger, would seem to furnish a possible case of superconscious lucidity, if it is nothing more. Whatever we may think of its authenticity, such a psychical 'epiphenomenon'—however its was produced,—would offer a bold challenge to the scoffing atheist no less than the spirit conjurer; for it was taken as a providential intervention of a Higher Power and as in direct antagonism to anything magical, melodramatic or mediumistic.[6]

We would not, therefore, rule out such experiences as satanic, when there is no sign of satan nor of anything sinister. The Providence of God is boundless, and we cannot tell how far He may grant an immediate seeing or hearing of things to those who trustfully rely on His unfailing mercy. Then also, the boundary-line between the psychical and the physical is admittedly slender, and the numerous modern instances of a similar kind tend to confirm the possibility of invisible slate-writing, without medium, pencil, or professional conjuror. In any case, we do

---

[1] Benedict XIV, Treatise on 'Heroic Virtue,' Vol. III, pp. 141ff. Compare St. Thomas, Summa Theol. II, 2, q. 174 art. 1ff. (on prophecy). Devine, A Manual of Mystical Theology (London, 1903), Part IV, c. 8. [2] Barrett, l. c., p. 236. [3] Sibylline Oracles, Book VIII, v, 1–216 (Jewish); v. 217–500 (Christian). [4] Barrett, l. c., p. 199.
[5] R. D. Owens, Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World, Chapt. VI. "Memoirs of Sir Robert Bruce." [6] Harris, Essays in Occultism, pp. 115–132.

not have to go to trumpet-mediums for the 'direct voice,' nor to the séance-room for 'simple materialisation.' These are providential, though very precarious experiences of the human race; and how, or when, or where they may take place, would be beyond our capacities to determine. But that they have occurred and ever will occur in the list of real, though very rare, phenomena, the records of the Psychical Research Society leave no serious room for doubt.[7]

But these extraordinary sights and experiences have little or no theological sanction; they evade the ken of the moral critic; and their elusive and at times suspicious antecedents make them an unsafe index of a divine intervention. The devil can always imitate what seems beyond the power of nature to call forth, much more that which many believe to be still within her inscrutable frontiers. A more approved, if equally partial, message goes by the name of Apocrypha, pious Midrash, or Haggadah.

OBSCURE ORACLE . . . . DEFINED

The Book of Adam, the Secrets of Enoch, and the Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs might be none the less elevating because immensely posthumous compilations; they reveal hidden truths and tendencies which, even when mixed with much error, would seem to embody many a plausible and sometimes provable experience in their respective heroes. "The Apocalypse of Elias" is one of the latest of these finds and speaks of many a grand and genuine inspiration:

"*The word of the Lord came unto me, saying: 'Son of man! Say unto this people: Wherefore heap ye sins upon your sins?*' . . . 'ONE ONLY IS THE NAME OF GOD!'"[8]

Visions or voices of this kind are evidently more than passing danger-signals. And when we come to that immense body of 'concealed revelation' that has supplied us with the Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament, we are at a loss to determine where the natural or the spurious ends and where the genuine or the supernatural may be said to operate. Nevertheless, pious novels of this kind are at least instructive, and many theologians use them as a collateral source. They are of very varying value.

"*Augustus! A sibyl tells thee of a new-born child, in form most beautiful!*"[9]
"*Rise, Peter, Rock of my Apostles! Guard thy holy wisdom, confirm thy brethren!*"
"*Lord! Whither goest thou?*" (*Domine, quo vadis?*)[10]

That illuminations or apparitions of this kind *might* have been given to the respective parties, can hardly be questioned. Whether *as a fact* they were given, and *how* they were given, must always remain a mooted question. But some admit of sufficient historic control to make them plausible.

As to the Lives of the Saints, it is time that they were brought to book and given their due place in the annals of authentic psychical experiences of the human race. Of course no serious critic swallows the entire record in a lump, nor is he called upon to do so. Much of this matter is not meant to be literally true, but only mystically instructive; and here the borderland between the psychical and physical becomes more elusive than ever. Visions, voices, locutions, form-materialisations, the ringing of bells and so on, may still be classed with psychical phenomena of the subjective kind whenever there is no clear evidence of an actual seeing, hearing or touching to which more than one witness can testify. They are not for this reason less inspiring or less fraught with pedagogical purpose; rather the opposite. They appeal more directly to the soul of man.

"*John, I am here . . Be not afraid . . . I will set thee free.*"[11]
"*Have courage, my children . . The storm is over . . . You will all be saved.*"[12]

The first is an obscure apparition of the Saviour to St. John of the Cross, telling of his timely deliverance from the chains of worldly oppression. The second is a counterpart to the tempest-story of Sir Robert Bruce and describes the vivid

---

[7] Proceedings, S. P. R., Vol. X. and passim. [8] Georg Steindorff, Die Apokalypse des Elias (Leipzig, 1900), p. 67ff. [9] Sybilline Oracles, Book I, 381. [10] Apocalypse of Peter and Apocryphal Acts of Peter and Paul. [11] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 94. [12] H. J. Coleridge, S. J., Life of St. Francis Xavier, p. 102.

appearance of Saint Francis Xavier to some shipwrecked mariners, giving them vigorous words of encouragement, when all the time he was consciously and physically on another vessel. Stories like this, however improbable, seem to be well supported; but they do not necessitate a more than psychic feeling of a mysterious presence which, in conjunction with a highly strung nervous tension on the part of the receivers, easily passes into the veridical impression of a speaking form. Yet even so, the *ensemble* of the experiences and the personalities with whom they deal are so lofty, if not unique, that a supernatural power must probably be invoked to account for their integrity and phenomenal intensity.

SIGNED ORACLE . . . . ACCEPTED

In passing from these extracanonical records to the deuterocanonical Scriptures we come considerably nearer to what admits of decisive historical and ecclesiastical approbation. The Prophets of the Second Canon are more than sea-captains or saintly visionaries. They are professional seers who have come to deliver a world-important message, a 'signed' oracle which is supernatural and inspired in all its parts. For this there are no profane parallels; for they speak with unerring voice. Tobias, Judith and the Machabees bring us nearer to a definite pedestal of vaticination.

"*I am Raphael, one of the Seven who stand before the Lord.*"[13]

Whatever the nature of this mysterious apparition to the young Tobias, it was pregnant with far-reaching consequences for the theology of Israel. Passing visions appeal to the moment; prolonged conversations leave a permanent mark on the mental atmosphere of the times. So also of those whisperings of victory and final triumph:

"*He shall fall by the hand of a woman.*" "*The Lord Himself shall overthrow them.*"[14]

If these were isolated jottings from an unseen source, having no relation to the exceptional movements of the day or the special economy of a supernatural Providence, we would be inclined to see in them no more than the elusive mutterings of the sibyls. But as they are told of world-historic 'deliverers' and are conversant with epoch-making events in the higher illumination of the chosen people, we do not call their message apocryphal, but deutero-canonical; and this on the ultimate testimony of the Living Church, the final guardian of all prophecy. And if they fall short of still higher standards of canonicity, it is because their inspiration was admitted only after some controversy, not because there was any inherent deficiency in the oracle as such. They cannot be rejected without gravely impairing the integrity of the divine record.

Under the New Law we may take as an example the Epistle to the Hebrews, where many a divine locution seems to be implied in the numerous citations from the Old Testament which may have been vividly brought before the Apostle in the form of personal visitations from the Prince of Peace.

> "*Then said I, 'Lo, I come! In the volume of the book it is written of me, To do thy will, O God.'*"[15]

Indeed it is quite probable that one who had seen or heard so much by way of immediate intuition into the 'mysteries' should have been granted a similar experience on the present occasion, if indeed he wrote this great Jewish-Christian Apology. Men of extraordinary spiritual insight are apt to see and hear what they are writing about, though here of course we must go considerably beyond a mental phantasm if we would classify these impressions as directly and divinely imprinted. They would be immediately stamped on the visual and auditory faculties. There is no need to press the point; but similar remarks would apply to many implicit visions and locutions in the Second Canon, while for others we have the direct statement of their authors that they were in immediate contact with the "voice of the Lord," nay, that they felt His touch and had seen Him face to face.

---

[13] Tob., 12, 15. [14] Judith 9, 15; I Mach. 3, 22. [15] Hebr. 10, 7.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; that which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . . that declare we unto you."[16]

This initial statement in the Johannine epistles supplies the key to writings of less immediate acceptance in the early Church and raises their prophetical matter to a position of prime importance.

"Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of his saints."[17]

The Book of Enoch may well have prepared an obscure apostle for something like a direct locution from the glorified Savior.

SEALED ORACLE . . . . SUBLIMATED

And if this applies to writings of less unchallenged authority, it holds with greater force of the Prophets of the First Canon,—divine seers who are frequently the identical persons, but whose records have come down to us with a more unanimous approbation, illuminating the hidden lore and raising it in some cases to a standard equal to that of the most exacting protocol.

"Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."[18] *"What dost thou here, Elijah? Go forth and stand upon the mountain before the Lord."*[19]

The "sealed oracles" of Moses and Elias culminate in the sealed prophesies of St. John and impart to them additional sanction and sublimation. Theophanies of this kind are scattered widely over the pages of Holy Writ; and prescinding at present from their theological contents, they furnish the antecedents to much that is 'prophetical' as distinct from the 'predictive,' the doctrinal rather than the distantly divined. And what happens in one age can be repeated in another; there is a continuous record:

"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples" . . . *"Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee"* . . . *"Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak to thee."* . . . *"O Daniel, greatly beloved, fear not; peace be unto thee; be strong; yea, be strong . . . Shut up the words and seal the book."*[20]

Visions and voices of encouragement form, as it were, the preamble, sometimes the sequel, to a long chain of prophetical utterances, whose illuminative force can be appreciated only by a prolonged study of their combined subject-matter. Then they are seen to give evidence of a Guiding Hand which is vastly more powerful and inerrant than the profane scribble.

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" . . . *"What thou seest, write in a book; and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia."* . . . *"Fear not; I am the First and the Last."* . . . *"Seal up those things which the seven thunders have uttered."*[21]

On the purely phenomenal side these higher experiences might possibly be paralleled by many a pseudo-phantasm of the coarser kind. The burning bush, the firebrands, the seething pot, the whirring wheels, nay, even the consoling Savior, can rarely be hedged off from profane imitations. They admit of a partial conjuring up by the lower subconscious, not to speak of the bold deceptions of the father of lies. But when the phenomena are coupled with personalities who see and hear these things in full possession of their higher faculties and whose message has transformed a spiritual desert into a paradise of divine exuberance for the whole of mankind, a simple calculation of cause and effect requires us to assign them to a super-conscious source, nay, they must be referred to a direct illumination from the Father of lights. As a recent writer has wittily remarked, we do not expect the voice of God to issue from the 'coal-cellar.' We must take the elevator and ascend to the roof-gardens, we would breathe in the pure air of sublimated prophecy, free from the microbes of the vulgar and the phantastic. Slate-writing and spirit-catching fade away before the majestic march of the Divine Word.

---

[16] I John 1, 1–3. [17] Jude 14. [18] Exod. 3, 5. [19] 3 Kings 19, 9.
[20] Isa. 8, 16; Jer. 1, 5; Ezek. 2, 1; Dan. 10, 19; 12, 4. [21] Acts, 9, 4–5; Apoc. 1, 11; 10, 4.

RECENT ORACLE . . . . RESERVED

But all this, you will say, appeals to the past; it took place long ago; and while a convergence of testimony upon such a sweeping scale may incline the mind to accept the message as well attested, it gives at the most a good moral certainty. After all, we were not there in person to certify to its truth; and the modern investigator requires something more than a distant and to him doubtful record of what may or may not have happened some two or three thousand years ago. Evidence is wanted that similar, if not identical things persist to the present day; that the 'face' or 'voice' of the Lord may still be seen or heard, even if it be willingly allowed that the mental atmosphere of the times is hardly in tune for such an experience. Granting that this demand is in part legitimate, we are given the revelations of the more modern saints and visionaries as strongly confirming the biblical records and as supplying the necessary link between the distant past and the brightly dawning future.

These may be described as 'oracles in the making,' in that their form and content, though highly approved and commended, falls short of biblical canonicity, while their revelations, though not *de fide*, may some day become a matter of Divine Faith for those who receive them. They come in fact from a 'supercanonical' source.[22]

That the lives of the saints are replete with visions and voices of an apparently apocalyptic kind, seems fairly evident; they claim to uncover many a hidden truth or to shed fresh light upon the revealed past. Moreover, they do not reject the sensible or the phenomenal, but use it as the necessary antechamber to more subtle and sublime experiences.

"Spiritual men sometimes see the forms and figures of those of another life, saints or angels, good and evil, or certain extraordinary lights and brightness. They hear strange words, sometimes seeing those who utter them and sometimes not. They have a sensible perception at times of the most sweet odors, without knowing whence they proceed. Their sense of taste is also deliciously affected; and that of the touch so sweetly caressed at times that the bones and the marrow exult and rejoice, bathed, as it were, in joy."[23]

This may serve as an introduction to those higher psychical records of a more recent date, which go to swell the volumes of modern apocalyptic lore, be they natural or supernatural, realistic or fanciful in their ultimate character. A mixed source is wisely allowed for their variable contents, and for this reason they can never represent the highest flights of the soul unless these lower forms of autosuggestion are carefully excluded. *"Nothing can be more mistaken than the idea that there is a gulf between the natural and the supernatural, that no inspired person can make a mistake, that no one favored with revelations can misinterpret them."*[24]

However, if we eliminate the human and the imperfect, there is many a pious autograph that might pass for an inspired writing of the older form. *"This knowledge of pure truths requires, for its proper explanation, that God should hold the hand and wield the pen of the writer."*[25]

From this point of view the "Summa" no less than the "Imitation of Christ" might be called "inspired," that is dictated by a superior Providence; for who can question that, like the "Exercises" or the "Ascent," they have left an indelible impress upon the higher consciousness of humanity? Recall also the locutions:

> *"Thomas, thou hast written well of me" . . . "John, thou shalt serve me in an order whose ancient perfection thou shalt help to bring back."*[26]

Divine testimonies like this insure the super-canonicity of the document. Mental and spiritual geniuses invoke more than a spectre for their inspirations.

---

[22] Devine, Mystical Theology, p. 585ff. Benedict XIV, Heroic Virtue, III, p. 390ff.
[23] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 11, 1. [24] Joly, Psychology of the Saints, p. 97.
[25] Ascent, II, 26, 1. [26] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 28.

Furthermore, the language in which they are described demands in many cases a vivid and realistic impression upon the five senses, as witness:

"I see a face so beautiful . . . I feel a hand so heavenly . . . that I am ravished beyond human words at the very thought of them." . . . *"It is I! . . . Be not afraid!"* . . . *"Although I call it a 'picture,' you must not imagine that it looks like a painting; Christ appears as a living person, who sometimes speaks and reveals deep mysteries."*. . . *"He showed me His Heart, and I was ever after obliged to unfasten my habit, or to burst forth into torrents of words like songs, in order to lessen the heat of the interior fire which consumed me."*[27]

St. Francis and the impressed stigmata; St. John of the Cross and the miraculous lights, St. Peter Alcantara and the boiling cistern, St. Teresa, St. Magdalen of Pazzi and the more recent Margaret Mary of blessed memory, with their mysterious transverberations and transfixations,—these, with many others, give evidence of a Power *external* to the percipient which clothes itself at times in realistic, life-like and humanly palpable form. They speak of objective vision, even if some of these visions may have been psychical rather than physical in their actual make-up; seen, as it were, with the Teresian "eyes of the soul":

"Those who practice this devotion shall have their names written in my heart!"

If to these be added the marvels of Lourdes and Guadalupe, of Auriesville and Czentochowa, we are almost within range of our own experiences.

"I am the Immaculate Conception . . . Thou shalt build for me a sanctuary."

Now while we must admit that such visitations may not have been our personal privilege, they carry us practically to our own times, and to reject their united testimony would be equivalent to denying the existence of China because most of us have never been there. Millions of human beings can speak of marvellous illuminations of a similar nature and it is impossible to account for the entire record without some objective manifestations of a supernatural character, and this for the following reasons:

(1) The Church has invariably doubted or denied the phenomena with relentless fury until forced to admit their genuineness. No mediumistic jury can for a moment compare to the scientific siftings and ruthless ransackings of the Roman Congregations. There is always a 'devil's advocate' to plead the opposite; and even St. Joan of Arc, whose 'spiritistic' experiences have never been doubted by the occult fraternity, did not come into her rights until 1920! It is a long and laborious inquisition.[28]

(2) Even if the oracle is of a silent and secret nature, as is mostly the case, its extra-mental and super-human origin is proved by its *effects* and by eliminating one by one the possibly natural factors. Instantaneous healings of bodily tissue, certified by the medical faculty, are proof against hypnotism or autosuggestion, while the more progressive phenomena speak to us of a 'mind-cure' which is all the more desirable because the modern mind is sadly in need of a 'cure' which no amount of naturalism can effect—the spiritual regeneration of a badly shattered soul. When the psychical aftermath is such that it *trans*forms and *re*forms the moral life in addition to producing visible effects of a photographically measurable nature *in the body*, we may be quite sure that the psychical antecedent must be at least equally marvellous; it must tell of a Power, which, in view of this transcendent testimony, is capable of projecting itself externally in flesh and blood, of giving in fact a *physical demonstration* of its existence. You cannot get something out of nothing; and unique effects require unique causes. It is a psychometric test which is open to every honest critic to verify; for even relics tell of the past and reveal their origin by their 'imprints.'[29]

---

[27] Experiences of St. Teresa of Jesus as related in her "Life," XXVIII, 2ff and in "The Interior Castle" Sixth Mansion, 9, 2. Also those of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque on the Sacred Heart of Jesus as expounded by Joly in his Psychology of the Saints.

[28] See the "Acts of the Canonisation of Saints" down to the last issue and compare Benedict XIV. "Treatise on Beatification and Canonisation," passim.

[29] G. Bertrin, Histoire critique des événements de Lourdes, apparitions et guérisons (Paris, 1909).

(3) And most important of all, these lights and manifestations are given in the fully waking state and have nothing in common with hypnotic reverie, much less with the mediumistic trance. St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross, St. Joan of Arc, Bernadette of Lourdes, were perfectly normal human beings; at least, they were never abnormal or subnormal. And by this I mean that they were among the sanest and most well-balanced mentalities that could well appear on this planet. Even Bernadette was a child of some promise, while the immortal Joan has long been worshipped as a master-mind. As for St. Teresa, she represents the quintessence of level-headedness and worldly wisdom as well as the greatest religious 'psychic' and female theologian that the world has ever seen; she is a Doctor of Divinity *honoris causa!* These masters of the hidden wisdom are forever harping on the abysmal gulf which separates the real from the imaginary, the spontaneous from the self-induced, the conscious from the unconscious, the divine from the demoniacal. They are the reverse of everything soporific or quietistic.[30]

"To send them to sleep? . . . No, no, no!" . . . "The visions of God penetrate into the inmost parts of the soul and produce their effects, a quickened zeal and overpowering joy, which enable and dispose it to assent freely and lovingly to good."[31]

The matter is worth looking into and should be approached with the same spirit of skepticism and scientific scrutiny that distinguishes the most searching examination of spiritoidal phenomena.

And what have our adversaries to offer us by way of parallel experiences? Nothing, as a rule, but the disordered mutterings of a half-hysterical female, whose messages are padded with fishings and fakeries, and whose phenomena are due, partly to illuminated cheese-cloth, partly to the oozing out of a slimy, serpentine, jelly-substance that can be twisted into every imaginable shape and whose marionettes are able to turn somersaults in the lap of the performer! Even if it were granted that some visitor from another world might here and there have been allowed to stamp his features upon such ghastly stuff, it seems hardly reasonable to ask us to accept a phantastic foetal image, taken from the medium's body and even changing its sex for the amusement of the spectators (!), in place of those soul-transforming visitations from a Higher Sphere which, though equally rare and exceptional as they ever must be, come to us with a more than earthly 'overcoat' and open out an unending vista of heavenly sights and consolations of lasting mental and moral benefit.

As a fact, the Holy Face and the Miraculous Tilma are worth all the ectoplasms that were ever conjured up; and even when artistic reproductions of genuine originals, they speak of a past 'materialisation' which must be assumed for their extraordinary psycho-physical effects and their indelible imprints on cloth or canvass.[32] The 'talking' Crucifix may still be witnessed in Spain, the liquefaction of blood in the cathedral of Naples.[33] Even the bodies of saints are preserved from corruption, and St. John of the Cross is still lying in state in Segovia. These, we repeat, are not the highest criteria of the supernatural; but they are undoubtedly *some* of its criteria, and we offer them to those timid and treacherous souls who are always insisting upon immediate physical sight and touch as the only support to their very ricketty faith. Let them feel and find out for themselves, if this is the only way of recovering their lost inheritance.

To us the Medici Christ and the Sistine Madonna are sufficient to suggest an inspired masterpiece, painted, through human fingers, by a superhuman Hand; while the Virgin of Carmel is an ever fresh reminder of the pitying Mother, miraculously saving her children from the fires of sin. But all this supposes a long training

[30] Joly, Psychology of the Saints, pp. 64–117, 118–147.

[31] Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, 4, 14; Ascent, II, 11, 5.

[32] Palme, Die deutschen Veronica-legenden des XII, Jahrhunderts (Prague, 1892); Acta Santorum (Bolland), Feb. 1 (Paris, 1863). Anticoli, Historia de la Aparicion de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe (Mexico, 1879). The figures become 'animated,' step out of the picture and then return. The Strada Madonna of St. Ignatius is a famous instance.

[33] El Cristo de Limpias (1920). Cavéne, Le célébre miracle de S. Janvier (Paris, 1909).

in hieratic mysticism as well as an exhaustive study of the lower phenomena for its cumulative force. Even 'spirit-photography' might be helpful as demonstrating the existence of 'ethereal' images; and to this extent we welcome psychical investigations of whatever kind which, when not deliberately deceptive, may serve to throw additional light on a region hitherto scorned by the professional scientist. If alleged 'spirits' can reappear, why not the Savior, why not the Virgin? Have we not miraculous pictures of Notre Dame de la Salette? The production of occasional frauds does not exclude the possible existence of the genuine article. We may be on the brink of a great discovery.

For the present it may be interesting to note that, apart from the numerous conversions wrought by the ecclesiastical miracles from the ranks of spiritism, more than one psychical investigator can speak of a partial restoration of his own shattered faith:

"*I should like to add that a prolonged study of the phenomena has made the Bible, to my mind, a more wonderful book than ever, the Lord Jesus Christ a more precious Savior, and the truths of evangelical Christianity more profoundly true than I ever imagined.*"[34]

(3) THE PROPHETIC PRETERNATURAL

In so far as these mental elevations and physical wonders exceed the powers of nature at least in the *manner* in which most of them are operated, they carry us well over the borderland of another world and into its secret chambers. Sudden lights and impressions, whether in soul or body, which lift the subject beyond his mortal state and give him a connected vision of things above and beyond his fleeting horizon, must evidently be assigned to the supernatural; they tell of higher 'intuition.' Still, they do admit of some analogies and apparent imitations in the lower field of psychical phenomena; and until these are more definitely excluded, the modern spirit-seer is always ready to retort: 'I can do the same.'

But it is possible to eliminate more drastically the element of profane parallelism. When the messages speak of the past or present, subconscious memories or subliminal suggestions are never entirely ruled out; natural telepathy is always active and even the physical wonders, like Aaron's serpents, admit of some external reproduction or facsimilization. But when they relinquish the past and look into the distant future, and this in terms that imply a distinct vision of dramatic events which depend upon the elusive machinations of the *free will* of man, we are by common consent in a more sealed department of the superworld; we have entered the region of the dynamic preternatural in the stricter sense,—visions and locutions of sufficient *force* to annihilate space in the spiritual and time in the temporal order, to cleave asunder the gulf which separates *now* from *then*, the here from the hereafter. On the phenomenal side they entail such prodigies as long distance apport, levitation of the human body, revitalisation of organic tissue, bilocation and compenetration of material substances; and these, it is safe to say, belong to a region of 'transcendental physics' which can be invaded only by one Power other than the Lord of Light,—the "prince of the power of the air."

PROPHETIC VISION . . . . PROPHETIC VOICE ADVANCED FORM-PROJECTION

It is clearly out of the question to handle the subject of the 'predictive' in the present place in a manner that shall do justice to its extreme importance. I

[34] W. Wynn, in Carter's 'Spiritualism' (London, 1920), p. 224. For a critical estimate of the ecclesiastical 'miracles' compare a series of articles on "Some Physical Phenomena of Mysticism," by Herbert Thurston, S. J., in the London "Month," beginning with 'Levitation,' (April–May, 1919), and continuing with 'Telekinesis,' (June, 1919), 'Stigmatisation,' (July–October, 1919), 'Tokens of Espousal,' (Miraculous 'rings'), (Dec., 1919), 'Odor of Sanctity,' (Jan.–Feb., 1920), 'Incorruption,' (April–June, 1921). The author is careful in distinguishing the doubtful from the well demonstrated, as no ecclesiastical prodigy is 'of faith,' positively binding upon all.

shall content myself with briefly noting the principal stages in this upward movement into the unseen; for we meet with the same gradations in 'divination' as in the 'direct vision,' and similar distinctions must be made in the clearness and intensity of their manifestations.

OBSCURE PREDICTION . . . . CONJECTURED

At the bottom of the scale we place those more hazy previsions in which the determined future is conjectured with more or less plausibility. Apart from 'fortune-tellings' of the superstitious brand,—those conversant with astrology, palmistry, phrenology and the like,—there is probably many a vague foreboding which the prophet shares with the profane visionary. In so far as the preceding oracles are in part premonitory, their lower forms belong to this class of indefinite prognostication.

> "*If a bright star shines like fire at sunrise and sets with equal splendor in the West, the enemy's host will be vanquished in battle.*"[1]

This may serve as a sample of gentile prophecy which, though astrological and hermeneutically vague, points obscurely to some "star" of deliverance. The Babylonian seer, like the modern clairvoyant, may be in possession of a half-light by which he intues something more than a future sky-rocket. We may willingly allow that, with the help of human calculation, he may conjure up a conjectured composite which corresponds to some extent with a coming reality. Premonitions of this kind can hardly be excluded.[2]

SIGNED PREDICTION . . . . CERTIFIED

A higher stage is reached in the signed omens of the canonical scriptures:

> "*A star shall rise out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Seth.*"[3]

And the nature of this portent is revealed in the *Messiah Haggadah:*

> "*And the star shall shine from the East, and this is the star of the Messiah. And it will shine from the East for fifteen days, and if it be prolonged, it will be for the good of Israel.*"[4]

Admitting that these are scarcely more than teratic emblems and that they give no exact clue to the whence or whereabouts of the Redeemer, they acquire a different value when viewed in the light of the combined current of messianic expectations; they point to the one universal Saviour. Yet even as bare portents, they can be made good by their literal fulfilment:

> "*We have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him.*"[5]

Here is a definite statement which can be brought to book by historical and *a posteriori* methods. Was it ever known in the annals of human biography that a world-important deliverer was heralded by a special sign in the heavens predicted fully a *thousand years* before his birth, and one which can be proved to have occurred by the convergent testimony of the gentile Magi, not to speak of remote astronomical records? Whatever the nature of the "moving star," it stands alone in its unique appeal to fact in preference to fancy, the real rather than the imagined. The 'stars' of Mithras, Buddha and Zoroaster are largely legendary, while the Star of Bethlehem still defies the learned world with its unearthly glare. The subject cannot be developed with that pungency which it deserves. But I mention it as an illustration of a signed prediction which can be certified; and, though not excluding a partly astrological basis, it is clear that we must go beyond planetary conjunctions for its adequate source. Where is the 'horoscope' that will locate

[1] "Prehistoric Religion," p. 274.
[2] Joire, Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena, p. 341ff (Lucidity in the Future).
[3] Num. 24, 17. [4] Haggadoth Mashiach 6, 1. [5] Matt. 2, 2.

243980

the coming Savior in an obscure village of Juda, that speaks of a star which will "go before them" and "stand over" where the young child is born? If it exists, it is one which fell from heaven; and it is to heaven only that we must look for its manufacture.[6]

SEALED PREDICTION . . . . SUBLIMATED

But external portents, however striking, have often a naturalistic antecedent; they admit of some calculation or mechanistic prevision. When living beings take the place of inanimate objects and are directly focussed with all the details of a moving picture, we pass from the more determinable to the "free" future, human scenes and actions which cannot be scented out by the cleverest computations. This is the 'prophetical argument' *par excellence* and has been voluminously treated in many a master-work.[7]

Founded on the more mystical adumbrations of the Protevangelium, it develops the rôle of the coming Deliverer in successive stages, showing that He was to be a Semitic Savior, a Hebrew Savior, a Jewish Savior, a Levitical Savior, a Davidic Savior and a supernatural Savior. Furthermore, He was to be Prophet, Priest and King, and a very extraordinary "Son"; to be born of a virgin, to suffer and die, and yet to triumph. Then comes the climax:

"*And thou Bethlehem Ephrata art but a little one among the thousands of Juda, yet out of thee shall come forth He that shall rule my people Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity.*"[8]

Here we have a distinct prediction by which the external sign is sealed by the internal locution, a provable prophetical utterance whose fulfilment can only be denied by a reckless explosion of the gospel data.[9]

Then of course there are those more detailed items in the life of Christ which hark back to ancient prophecy and which cannot be deleted without expunging the historicity of such a life *in globo:*

"*Behold, a virgin shall conceive*"[10]; "*Out of Egypt have I called my son*"[11]; "*He shall be called a Nazarene*"[12]; "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness*"[13]; "*And he fasted forty days and forty nights*"[14]; "*The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them*"; "*Behold, I send my messenger before thy face who shall prepare thy way before thee*"; "*This is Elias who was for to come*"[15]; "*I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things concealed from the foundation of the world.*"[16]

The passion, delineated by Isaiah, stands out in strong relief:

"*no form or comeliness . . . despised and rejected . . . a man of sorrows . . . wounded for our transgressions . . . bruised for our iniquities . . . he was offered because it was his will . . . he opened not his mouth . . . he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter and as a lamb before his shearers*"[17]; "*After sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be slain . . . and after that, the appointed desolation.*"[18]

Even smaller items are portrayed with a masterful touch: "*Behold thy king cometh, meek, and sitting upon an ass*"[19]; "*My house shall be called the house of prayer*"[20]; "*I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered abroad*"[21]; "*They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots*"[22]; "*He was*

---

[6] Compare "Prehistoric Religion," pp. 285–290. [7] A. J. Maas, S. J., Christ in Type and Prophesy (New York, 1895). [8] Mic. 5, 2; Matt. 2, 6.

[9] "Prehistoric Religion," pp. 279–282. Compare: Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (New York, 1903), Vol. I, p. 212. W. Ramsay, Was Christ born in Bethlehem? (London, 1898). Also The International Critical Commentary, Gospel of St. Matthew (1910), pp. 14–15 (on the Magi).

[10] Isa. 7, 14; Matt. 1, 23. [11] Hos. 11, 1; Matt. 2, 15. [12] Isa. 11, 1; Matt. 2, 23.
[13] Isa. 40, 3; Matt. 3, 3. [14] 3 Kings 19, 8; Matt. 4, 2.
[15] Isa. 35, 5; Mal. 3, 1; 4, 5; Matt. 11, 5, 10, 14. [16] Ps. 77, 2; Matt. 13, 35.
[17] Isa. 53, passim. [18] Dan. 9, 26; Matt. 24, 15. [19] Isa. 62, 11; Zach. 9, 9; Matt. 21, 5.
[20] Isa. 56, 7; Matt. 21, 13. [21] Zach. 13, 7; Matt. 26, 31. [22] Ps. 21, 19; Matt. 27, 35.

numbered with the transgressors"[23]*; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*[24]*; "I thirst"*[25]*; "It is finished"*[26]*; "Not a bone of his shall be broken"*[27]*; "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."*[28]

Even the resurrection and ascension, the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of the Aryan races, find their preambles in remote type or prophecy and were distinctly foretold by the Messiah on several occasions:

"I know that my Redeemer liveth"[29]*; "The dead men shall live, with my dead body shall they arise"*[30]*; "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days"*[31]*; "I am the resurrection and the life"*[32]*; "Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it up"*[33]*; "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth"*[34]*; "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof!"*[35]*; "Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my father!"*[36]*; "And a people with their leader shall come and destroy the city"*[37]*; "The ram which thou sawest with two horns is the king of the Medes and Persians"*[38]*; "O Jerusalem, thou that stonest the prophets! Behold thy house is left unto thee desolate"; "there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down"*[39]*; "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to another nation yielding the fruits thereof"*[40]*; "Many shall come from the East and the West and from the North and from the South and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."*[41] Surmise and suggestion cannot be invoked for these very forcible delineations.

I pass over the more veiled prophesies of Daniel and St. John the Apostle, as they are too subtle and supernal to be easily diagnosed; also those that deal with the distant future and the second advent, as they are beyond our reckoning. But the above reveal a continuous chain of forecasts and fulfilments which stand entirely unparalleled in any other collection of sacred lore that has come down to us.

SILENT PREDICTION . . . . SECRETED

By comparison with visions of the past or present, introspections into the future are more rare and exceptional in the lives of the saints, and still more in those of profane seers. A distinct and detailed prediction of the far-distant future, with all the niceties of time, place and circumstance, would be a staggering spectacle indeed; it simply does not exist. However, it is admitted that a partial lifting of the veil which separates the today from the tomorrow may here and there be granted to ordinary mortals irrespective of their calling and for some noble or lofty purpose:

"God still in our day makes revelations of the second kind. He reveals to some individuals how long they shall live, what trials they have to endure, or what will befall such and such a person, such or such a kingdom. And even with regard to the mysteries of our faith, He is wont to reveal the truths thereof by a special light and meaning."[42]

Under this heading might then be classed those somewhat precarious premonitions of which psychical literature offers us so many examples. Coming events cast their shadows before; and every now and then we are given a story of some amazing 'fulfilment' which looks on the face of it like a direct presentiment. On the above principles we are not prepared to deny the possibility of such scentings; but we would request the psychic researcher to distinguish more emphatically what is more or less 'in the air' or, if you like, the 'ether,'—something immediately impending,—from what is distant, dark and obscure, and can send out no 'traces' or feelers to announce its advent. Such are the long chain of prophesies we have just considered.

---

[23] Isa. 53, 12; Mark 15, 28. [24] Ps. 21, 2; Matt. 27, 46. [25] Ps. 68, 22; John 19, 28.
[26] Dan. 9, 24; John 19, 30; Apoc. 21, 6. [27] Ps. 33, 21; Exod. 12, 46; Num. 9, 12; John 19, 36.
[28] Zach. 12, 10; John 19, 37. [29] Job 19, 25. [30] Isa. 26, 19. [31] Dan. 12, 12.
[32] John 11, 25. [33] John 2, 19. [34] Matt. 12, 40; Jonah 2, 1. [35] 4 Kings 2, 12.
[36] John 20, 17. [37] Dan. 9, 26. [38] Dan. 8, 20.
[39] Matt. 23, 37; 24, 2; Mark 13, 2; Luke 13, 34–35. [40] Matt. 21, 43.
[41] Matt. 8, 11; Luke 13, 29. [42] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 27, 3.

For this reason we do not make much of the prophecies of hagiology except when they give evidence of a similar vision into the complex future. St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Vincent of Ferrer are said to have been armed with extraordinary powers of prognostication, verging in some cases upon the biblical standards of direct insight,—focussing the future with some accuracy of detail. There is no reason to question the reality of some of these feats, as they find their confirmation from so many quarters:

"*You are going shoeless to Rome; but you will return to Spain with your shoes on.*"[43]

Even when these things are rationally probable, the confidence with which they are predicted, together with their repeated verifications, must incline us to see in them something more than common clairvoyance. Where is the palmist whose veridical utterances are not copiously interlarded with fallacious and fictitious messages? The devil, no doubt can prophesy; yet never without the alloy of the false and the phantastic.[44]

LONG DISTANCE APPORT

That a body can lose its quantity, move through space, and then resume its former dimensions, has always been allowed as a possible condition of material substances.[45] Nay more, it is implied in many phenomena recorded in Holy Writ in which bodies are apparently whisked off to distant points by invisible forces. If the ravens that fed Elias were providential, the powers that supplied the prophet Daniel with a miraculous nourishment were prodigious; they entailed the instantaneous transportation of the prophet Habakuk to the banks of the Euphrates![46] In the gospels also there are several instances of a rather mysterious apport, whether we think of the feeding of the five thousand, or of the coals of fire and the fish, or the strengthening chalice of the Savior. They include the prodigies of augmentation and multiplication:

"*And they gathered up the fragments twelve baskets full*"; "*And they saw a fire of coals there and fish laid thereon and bread*"; "*And angels came and ministered to him.*"[47]

But if we apply the term to the transportation of non-human objects by super-material agencies, there is many a thaumaturge who has claimed the possession of similar powers. Even the removing of mountains and the passage of objects through impenetrable walls, has been recounted in the lives of the saints with a greater or less degree of pious plausibility. We are not surprised, therefore, if one of the latest discoveries in higher dynamics should demonstrate the actual possibility of such a 'passage,' without wires, trickery or electrical currents.

"*I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about.*"[48]

When we are told that flowers, newspapers, and even concertinas can dematerialise, pass through solid obstacles, and then project themselves in full bloom and vigor into the midst of a baffled audience, it is surely premature to label the miracles of the saints with the word "impossible." If pianos can travel from Dan to Beersheba, why not the Holy House of Loretto?[49]

Contra:

Admitting, however, that many of these sensational feats are still *sub judice*, while others are palpably fraudulent, the more sober and well-tested phenomena

---

[43] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 105. [44] Compare Barrett, l. c., p. 183.
[45] Mercier, A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy, 1, p. 86ff.
[46] 3 Kings 17, 6; Dan. 14, 33. [47] Matt. 14, 20; John 21, 9; Matt. 4, 11.
[48] Sir William Crookes, F. R. S., Researches in Spiritualism, p. 91.
[49] Evidence in Flammarion, Mysterious Psychic Forces, pp. 90–154 and passim. Zöllner, Transcendental Physics, pp. 17, 50, 90ff.

go at least to support the possibility of greater marvels. If 'apport' is provable, it will make the legendary lore more open to acceptance. In fact, it will put the divine wonder-worker upon a still higher pedestal; for his phenomena are accompanied by extraordinary illuminations.

This reaches its climax in 'sacramental apport' and the 'tokens of espousal':

"*Suddenly the Host flew through the air and settled on my tongue . . . .*

"*I was raised in rapture and bathed in a marvellous light*" . . . .

"*He placed a ring on my finger in sight like unto a brilliant diamond.*"[50]

Whatever we may think of 'leaping lilies' or 'transported flowers', these instantaneous productions of ultra-sacred objects must evidently be classed with miracles of the first rank; though, as mere phenomena, they might still be described as preternatural marvels.

SOMATIC LEVITATION

On the other hand, the lifting of the human body into the air and its fixture in that position without visible support is not easily paralleled outside the records of the canonical supermen. It finds its antecedents in the levitations or miraculous suspensions of the Savior and of the early saints and prophets, and is distributed far and wide over the annals of teratology. I give two examples of its more modern manifestations; one doubtful, the other well attested:

"*Three times I saw Daniel Douglas Home levitated, once sitting in an easy-chair, once kneeling on his chair and once standing on the floor. On separate occasions I witnessed two children with their chairs rise from the floor in broad daylight and under the best circumstances for observation.*"[51]

Such a meagre story would be promptly rejected by any jury in default of additional witnesses and in view of its grave improbability. But coming as it does from a President of the Royal Society and reinforced by a vast amount of evidence from other quarters, it would be temerarious to say that it could not, or did not take place. Yet even if its occurrence be granted, we are a long way off those continuous and protracted suspensions of the Saints which have been witnessed by a large concourse of people and are eloquent of the most sublime supernatural rapture:

Contra:

"*To her great amazement she saw St. Teresa raised in the air, where she remained unconscious of the messenger's presence. She withdrew and called the other nuns who became witnesses of the same marvel. On the other side of the grating they discovered St. John of the Cross, also raised above the ground in the same way. The mystery was explained to them afterwards. The two saints had begun to speak of the Most Holy Trinity, and had fallen into trance together.*"[52]

In the XX chapter of her "Life" she describes the sensation in her own words:

"*I repeat it: you feel and see yourself carried away, you know not whither . . . My soul was transported . . . and now and then the whole body as well, so that it was lifted up from the ground . . . It seemed to me, when I tried to make some resistance, as if a great force beneath my feet lifted me up . . . This has not happened to me very often. Once, however, it too, took place when we were all together in choir . . . once when some great ladies were present . . . but still the rapture was observed.*"[53]

The control was absolute. The seraphic Mother was forcibly "held down," and yet the levitations took place.

It would be absurd to put this down as a case of pious hysteria or of possible concoction to enforce some salutary moral lesson or internal comfort. For its repeated attestations by other witnesses and on many other occasions leaves no reasonable room for doubt, that with the *ipse dixit* of the parties themselves, their

---

[50] St. Teresa, Life, C. XX. St. Catherine of Sienna, Espousals.
[51] Sir William Crookes, F.R.S., Researches in Spiritualism, p. 89 (in substance).
[52] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 70. [53] Life, XX, 4–9.

word must carry some external justification, unless we are to put them down as a band of deliberate impostors and malicious liars.[54] Then, also, their testimony does not stand alone. As Sir William Barrett has said:

"*Teresa was not the only saint of whom levitation is recorded. In the Acta Sanctorum similar phenomena are attributed to more than* 40 *saints or other persons and said to be attested by crowds of their contemporaries. The Bishop of Valencia was believed to have been miraculously suspended for some hours and was thus seen by his clergy and a multitude of others. In fact, unless we deny the whole of the past and present records of these phenomena, attempted explanations are as difficult to accept as the miracles themselves.*"[55]

If, however, these floatings in the air might be open to imitations, real or fanciful, in the wonders of oriental or occidental magic, this is only to be expected from the similar feats of Simon Magus of old and are in partial corroboration of the sacred record. But there is some difference between Daniel Douglas Home and Blessed Teresa of the Incarnation! Moreover, Home became a Catholic; and who can tell how far his own marvels dragged him in to the City of God?[56]

REVITALISATION

The cure of diseases or the healing up of organic tissue need not always entail a recourse to preternatural agencies. Even when suddenly effected and without visible antecedents, there is always room for possible mento-material action and for the speeding up of organic processes. But the *instantaneous production of new tissue or the revitalisation of certainly dead tissue* stands alone in the list of prophetical and saintly marvels. Modern limb- or liver-engraftings cannot offer the smallest approach; as these members are taken from *living* beings; they are freshly animated. When mortification has run its course, life can never be restored.[57]

Healings of this kind are almost on a level with new creations and are abundantly attested in the works of the Great Healer. The instant cure of organic diseases,—maladies in which living tissue has been definitely destroyed or eaten up,—calls for more than a mind-cure or even the most powerful hypnotic suggestion.[58] Such, for instance, would be the healing of the ten lepers, of the ear of Malchus, of the man with the withered hand,—restorations or revivifications which are proof against mental therapeutics of the most advanced description. Even the cure of paralysis or the stopping up of the issue of blood are unique in the speed and certainty with which they are accomplished, while the giving of speech to the dumb, of hearing to the deaf, and of sight to the blind, must always remain unapproachable in the extraordinary despatch and facility with which they are operated. One word or gesture, and the thing is done![59]

Now while we are not prepared to deny that such a power may be in partial possession of some pious modern revivalist or 'Healer Hickson,'—was it not promised to Jew and Gentile alike? and cannot even the heathens prophesy in His Name?—the more critical cases of 'creative' curing have ever been the distinctive badge of His closest followers in every age of the race:

Supra:

"*But suddenly, inspired by God, he began to read the gospel of St. Mark, and when he came to the words, 'Upon the sick they shall lay their hands,' he laid his hands on the*

---

[54] Heriz, pp. 71ff (for additional cases). [55] On the Threshold of the Unseen, p. 79.

[56] For a critique of these phenomena, as well as the Home case, see two articles on "Levitation" in the "Month" for April–May, 1919; also one on "The Conversion of the Medium Home." It appears that this gallant man was the only medium that was never detected in fraud, though his conversion was not as smooth and whole-hearted as might have been desired. But Crookes assures us that "to those who knew him Home was one of the most lovable of men, and his perfect genuineness and uprightness were beyond suspicion" (apud Barrett, op. cit., p. 59).

[57] See any medical work on fractures, lesions, sanitations and amputations.

[58] See above, p. 8ff. [59] Luke 17, 11; 22, 50; 6, 6; 5, 18; 8, 43; 11, 14; 18, 35, et alibi.

sister who was in her agony and the sickness departed from her. The next day she left her bed. The physicians declared her healing was miraculous."[60]

Though the imposition of hands might set in motion the machinery of 'suggestion,' it would take a good deal of strong thinking to inhibit a 'sickness unto death,' the impending dissolution of the vital organism. On the other hand, the phenomena that are still offered to us at Lourdes and La Salette come to us with a more modern and critical sifting and furnish us with an absolutely incontestable proof, sworn to by the medical faculty, that gospel-miracles of the creative kind do as a fact take place in the full limelight of the twentieth century. Where are the Christian Scientists, or the Emmanuelists or Mystic Shriners, that can openly defy the most hard-headed surgeons with the microscope and the X-ray flash? Lepers no less than lunatics are cured in the saving waters.[61]

COMPENETRATION . . . . BILOCATION SUBSTANTIAL TRANSFORMATION

When a material body passes through another, it may be arrested in its onward passage and halt within the confines of that other body. In this case it is said to compenetrate that body or to occupy the same space with it. It would seem, therefore, that, when genuine, such a condition is often implied in many of the apport-phenomena above referred to.

But this is trifling compared with the further claim, now demanded by the more advanced cosmologists and psycho-physicists, that a body can be in two places at once,—so-called 'bilocation' as distinct from 'bicorporeity,'—an old thesis handed down from the middle ages. And apart from any theories of 'substance' and 'ubication' and their supposed separation in the real of experience, it seems quite necessary to postulate some such distinction in view of the realistic visions of the saints and others, in which they have seen, heard and even touched, not only Savior and the Virgin, supposedly in heaven, but also human beings of the more common order who most certainly were also and at the same time in a different portion of terrestrial space.

Supra:

I need not instance the form-projections of divine or beatific beings, as they are implied under what we have already treated as 'direct' visions:

"*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,*" "*Fear not, I am the First and the Last,*" "*John, I am here, be not afraid,*" "*I am the Immaculate Conception.*"[62]

In so far as these are external projections of the living form ostensibly identical with the glorified body, we cannot put them down as intermediate or angelic forms without compromising their personal and prophetical character. The Redeemer and the Blessed Mother are there *in propria persona*, though they are also in heaven. We cannot multiply their bodies any more than we can divide their souls. It is probably a case of real, physical bilocation, though under alien and assumed appearances. Such, at least, is the more approved opinion.[63]

But I would recall the examples given under telepathy and clairvoyance as giving further evidence of possible physical bilocation. This is more especially the case with the translation of the apostle Thomas to Mexico, of St. John Cupertino to his native city, and of St. Francis Xavier to a distant shipwreck, when all the time they were seen in their familiar entourage. The aerial flights of Ezekiel, Daniel and Habakuk might belong to this class and furnish the precedent for those of Maria d'Agreda, Blessed Rita of Cascia, Blessed Lidwine, St. Peter Rogala, St.

---

[60] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 129.

[61] Bertrin, Histoire critique des événements de Lourdes, apparitions et guérisons (Paris, 1909). Two "hopeless" cases of cancer and tuberculosis, cured "definitely" and "beyond the operation of the laws of nature," appear also in a current issue of the *Semaine Réligieuse* (Paris, 1922).

[62] Acts 9, 5; Apoc. 1, 17; Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 94; Lourdes-apparitions.

[63] Devine, Mystical Theology, pp. 522, 527ff: Benedict XIV, Heroic Virtue, III, 297-298.

John of the Cross and many others. The most striking instance is that of St. Alphonsus Liguori, in comparatively recent times, of which Elephas Levi, (M. Constant), writes as follows:

"There is no fact in history more incontestable or more effectually proved than the fact of the real and visible presence of Father Alphonsus de Liguori at the bedside of the pope, (Clement XIV), when in his last agony, while the same Alphonsus was in ecstacy and in prayer in a remote district in Italy."[64]

Furthermore, the appearance of Ananias to the apostle Paul, "laying his hands upon him," may have had some material and tangible aspect; and to this extent it goes to confirm the reported cases of somatic form-projection in our own day which are related of more ordinary persons. Stories like those of Sir Robert Bruce may at times require such a process, though for most of these "phantasms of the living," a simple mental impress seems sufficient.[65]

Finally we have the change of one thing into another which figures so prominently in Holy Writ no less than divine tradition. Water is changed into blood, rods into serpents, quails into manna, dust into pearls, fringes into flowers. These are none the less powerful object-lessons because some of them might be more of the nature of apports or providential wonders than of literal and substantial transformations on the spur of the moment.

Supra:

On the other hand the physical miracles of the Savior stand upon a higher footing and admit of no imitations or poetical mystifications. Of these the conversion of water into wine furnishes of course the well-known example; and this, it is safe to say, can hardly be touched by any form-mutations of whatever kind, whether in sacred or secular lore.[66]

"The conscious water saw its Lord and blushed!"

In vain would the poet describe its unique and extraordinary character; for no amount of word painting can do justice to its inimitable efficacy and transcendent realism.

It is instructive to note, however, that the modern discovery of the instability of the elements, of the conversion of one substance into another by abnormal heat-production, of a similar conversion without a corresponding change in chemical constitution,—so-called 'isomerism,'—has brought the mediaeval alchemy, formerly ridiculed, into better repute, while it has made the miracle of Cana, and even that of the Eucharist, less inconceivable to a certain class of minds than was formerly the case. Recent theories of the constitution of matter reverse a good deal of the old-time atomism. When hydrogen can be turned into oxygen and carbon can appear under the allotropic forms of coal or diamonds, where are we to call a halt to further transmutations of substance or transformations of properties defying the analysis of the boldest chemical expert? And if water can pass into wine, why not wine into Blood, and bread into the Body, as is directly implied in the words of Institution? What nature performs in successive stages is performed by the Lord of nature in a single instant; and to this extent her marvels may be a help to those who must have natural parallels to everything in heaven and earth. Let them study the lilies, if this is their only hope![67]

But for us it seems almost sacriligeous to appeal to chemistry for a superchemical Wonder, and we prefer to treat the Eucharist under a separate heading. In the meantime sensible marvels of the lower order are scattered broadcast in the annals of the holy seers:

"He sends to them certain supernatural communications, such as visions of saints

---

[64] Ritual of Spiritualism, Vol. 1, p. 206.

[65] Compare Harris, Essays in Occultism, pp. 47, 115ff. [66] John 2, 1.

[67] Compare Sir E. Rutherford, F. R. S., The constitution of matter and the evolution of the elements, Smithsonian "Report" (1915–1916), pp. 167–202.

or of holy things in bodily form, delicious odors, locutions, accompanied by a pure and singular sweetness, whereby the very senses are greatly strengthened in virtue and withdrawn from the desire of evil things."[68]

IV. THE SEALED SUPERNATURAL

But all these predictions and prodigies, however compelling, can never be made absolutely airtight to the incursions of the evil one. Premonitions dovetail into prophesies, form-projections into miraculous transportations. Even the surging of the body into the air can rarely be made proof against the 'prince of the power of the air'; it has been, and might still be travestied, whether in India or the Egyptian Hall. The 'Levitation of the Princess Carmak' shows how slender is the wall which separates a bold deception from a genuine prodigy in its mere externals.

A clean sweep of all the lower phenomena is effected only in those very rare and exalted states of the human subject in which a foretaste is given of what belongs to a different sphere of human existence,—an anticipation, as it were, of the paradise of the blessed. For if the preceding prodigies are fairly eloquent of a super-terrestrial source and a more than natural operation, there are others that transport us, soul and body, into the next world and are sealed to all but the favored few.

BEATIFIC VISION . . . . BEATIFIC VOICE
UNIQUE FORM-PROJECTION

So far we have treated mental illuminations or material impressions more or less on humanistic or phenomenal lines. When those illuminations exceed their earthly conditions of receptivity and are more directly conversant with interior essences, they become *intuitions*, that is, superhuman assimilations of supernatural objects. They are revelations in which visions and voices act as the mere drapery for something which transcends the senses, and even the reason, lifting the subject far above the conditions of space and time or of discursive argument. They are sealed by such marvels as assumption, ascension, resurrection and transfiguration; and these form a diamond wall which is adamant to the profane soothsayer.

Though it is a received saying that "no man can see God and live," there are admitted exceptions in the history of the heavenly seers, some having been favored with a partial, others with a total lifting of that veil that separates incarnate from discarnate existence. Let us briefly note the various stages of this unveiling and the degrees to which it may be obtained on this side of the grave.

SOUL-TRANCE . . . . LOWER INTUITION
SIGN-REVELATION (APOCRYPSIS)

When the seer is 'carried away' and sees something pertaining to the superworld, but under sensible and symbolic images, we are moving in that lower order of intuition connoted by the term 'sign-revelation,' the unfolding of some hidden and heavenly truth by external symbols. Such a 'transport' is something rather different from a mediumistic stupor and may be generally applied to those more exalted conditions of mentality in which, though the senses are in part quiescent, they are neither deluded nor disabled, but are indefinitely strengthened and sublimated by their harmonious union with the higher faculties which are groping out into a world of pure forms saturated with a transcendent mental and moral light.

We have many examples of this in the records of Holy Writ and they form, as it were, an ascending ladder of heavenly manifestations. Here are some of the more striking instances:

---

[68] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 17, 3.

"AND THE BUSH BURNED WITH FIRE AND WAS NOT CONSUMED" . . . "BEHOLD, THERE ARISETH A LITTLE CLOUD IN FORM LIKE UNTO A MAN'S HAND" . . . "BURST OUT, YE HEAVENS, AND LET THE CLOUDS RAIN FORTH THE JUST ONE" . . . "BEHOLD, HE COMETH WITH THE CLOUDS, AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM, AND THEY ALSO THAT PIERCED HIM, AND ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH SHALL MOURN BECAUSE OF HIM."[1]

Admitting that these objects are coupled with theophanies or divine manifestations, it is no less evident that they are of a material and sensible nature and act as the channels or exponents of some higher and hidden truth. The sign,—whether as light, fire, clouds, rains and so on,—reveals something of the thing signified, though very inadequately and under material images,—the great I AM, THE COMING MESSIAH, THE FUTURE VIRGIN, THE ETERNAL JUDGE. In each case we can prescind from the full content of the revelation and focus our attention upon its proximate starting-point, something external or tangible. Moreover, in no single instance does the visionary abandon his self-possession or swoon away. In all probability, Moses and Elias were gently lifted above their natural and normal plane of consciousness, while Isaiah and St. John the Divine were not, at that moment at least, in a fainting or falling condition of helplessness. It is a state of silence or absorption in which, though the breath is frequently halted or the circulation slightly impaired, no violence whatever is done to the health or sanity of the human subject.[2]

SPIRIT-ECSTASY . . . . MIDDLE INTUITION FORM-REVELATION (ANAPHEROSIS)

In passing from material signs to 'pure forms' we eliminate more effectually the play of the lower senses and require, in fact, a temporary suspension of some of the vital functions. But very often the same parties may be the subjects of more than one stage of supernatural illumination.

"I AM THAT I AM" . . . "THE STILL, SMALL VOICE" . . . "WHAT DOST THOU HERE, ELIJAH?" . . . "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD OF HOSTS" . . . "SON OF MAN, STAND UPON THY FEET AND I WILL SPEAK TO THEE" . . . "MY SOUL DOTH MAGNIFY THE LORD" . . . "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED" . . . "AND I SAW A GREAT WONDER IN HEAVEN, A WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN, AND SHE HAD THE MOON UNDER HER FEET, AND UPON HER HEAD A CROWN OF TWELVE STARS."[3]

With the possible exception of the Savior's visions, most of these elevations entail some narcosis of the lower system expressed by the blinded countenance, muffling up the face in the mantle, being undone, not being able to speak, falling upon the face, grieved in spirit or troubled in body, though highly elated and exalted in the upper part of the soul. They are the necessary accompaniment of the 'middle intuition.'

"*It is also believed that God showed His own essence to Moses, for He said unto him that He would set him in a hole of the rock and protect him with His right hand, that he might not die when His glory passed by. This passing by was a transient vision, God upholding with His right hand the natural life of Moses.*" "*But these essential visions, such as those of St. Paul, Moses, and our father Elias, when, at the whistling of a gentle air, he 'covered his face wnth his mantle,' are transient and most rare occurrences, and scarcely ever granted, and to very few; for God shows them only to those who, like these, are the mighty ones of His Church and Law.*"[4]

---

[1] Exod. 3, 2; 3 Kings 18, 44; Isa. 45, 8; Apoc. 1, 7.

[2] Devine, Mystical Theology, p. 444ff. Joly, Psychology of the Saints, p. 89ff.

[3] Exod. 3, 14; 3 Kings 19, 12; Isa. 6, 3; Jer. 1, 6; Ezek. 2, 1: Dan. 8, 17; Luke 1, 46; 9, 35; Matt. 3, 16–17; Apoc. 12, 1.

[4] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 24, 2.

It is no less remarkable,—though with his accustomed modesty he does not speak of it himself,—that this John was one of the few modern ecstatics who has combined such a lifting up of the soul with a lifting up of the body, elevation with levitation. Raised in the air with his spiritual consort,—

"*The two saints had begun speaking of the Most Blessed Trinity and had fallen into a trance together. St. Teresa often said that it was impossible for anyone to speak of God to St. John of the Cross, because either he or the other fell into a trance.*"[5]

Equally suggestive, though of less immediate import, was that unearthly dove that was said to have hovered over his head on various occasions:

"*When the saint was living in Granada, a dove of wonderful beauty and brilliant plumage, with a golden circle around its throat, was often seen hovering over his cell. The dove was visible, not only to the friars, but also to the seculars. It was a subject of conversation that the mysterious dove followed the saint and remained with him wherever he might be.*"[6]

Even the Voice that spoke to the Redeemer is echoed on a lower plane and receives an inspiring answer from His strenuous servant:

"*John, what shall I give thee for all that thou hast done and suffered for me?*" . . . "*To suffer and to be held in contempt for thy sake.*"[7]

Such suffering or 'dying' for the Lord is a common experience with the mystics and carries a silent hint at some form of life-suspension which is evidently not injurious. But of this more presently.

SUBLIME RAPTURE . . . . HIGHER INTUITION SUPER-REVELATION (APOCALYPSIS)

When the human and the symbolical is reduced to a vanishing-point, the revelation becomes a complete uncovering, an 'apocalypse' in the proper sense of the word. Here again the preceding visions do the duty of this loftier 'seeing' whenever they are conversant with immediate insight. But in rapture external forms are at a minimum and the saint or prophet finds himself face to face with an 'unspeakable' which can hardly be described:

"I AM THAT I AM" . . . "THE LORD OUR GOD" . . . "THE ANCIENT OF DAYS" . . . "THE SON OF MAN" . . . "THE EVERLASTING SAVIOR" . . . "THE ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE FIRST AND THE LAST" . . . "THE TIME, TIMES AND A HALF-A-TIME."[8]

Much of this unveiling, whether to Moses or Elias, Peter or Paul, Daniel or St. John the Divine, carries us far beyond the most ethereal phantasm, though it appears under human drapery. It is allied to the 'cryptogram,' concealing transcendental truths that elude all picturizing.

The transcendent Person who appeared to Daniel at Susa, to St. Peter at Joppa, to St. Paul on the road to Damascus, to St. John on the island of Patmos, was of such unearthly appearance, so like "*the sun that shineth in his power,*" that He could not be intued with mortal eyes; He was above all fleshly vision.

"*I knew a man in Christ . . . whether in the body, I know not; whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth . . . such a one was caught up into the third heaven . . . and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter*" . . .

"*I was in spirit on the Lord's day and heard a voice behind me of a trumpet saying: 'What thou seest write in a book and send it to the Seven Churches which are in Asia.*"[9]

This describes in a general way the condition of divine rapture, while the change of countenance, the swooning away, and perhaps the "sting in the flesh," brings out the painful side of such an experience:

---

[5] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 70. [6] Ibid., p. 170. [7] Ibid., p. 171.
[8] Exod. 3, 14; 3 Kings 18, 39; Dan. 7, 9; Acts 9-10; Dan. 12, 7; Apoc. 1, 8; 12, 14.
[9] 2 Cor. 12, 1–9; Apoc. 1, 10.

"And I, Daniel, fainted, and was sick many days" . . . "And when I had seen him, I fell at his feet as one dead."[10]

We do not, therefore, deny that the divine and the diabolic trance have certain external features in common,—a loss of sensibility, an occasional stiffening of the body, an apparent lethargy. A physical price must always be paid for every spiritual privilege. But in the former case the pathological symptoms are temporary and more of the nature of functional suspensions, while the intellect and will are enormously illuminated and fortified by a flood of light and spiritual power; they are 'inebriated.' In the latter case the symptoms are more often prolonged and prejudicial to mind and body alike; they are apt to give birth to organic diseases, and sometimes develop into chronic hysteria, mental debility, complete aphasia, and even incipient insanity, as we have forcibly illustrated above.[11]

Then also the raptures of the modern saints reveal their own source:

"The splendor of Him who is revealed in the vision resembles an infused light, as of the sun, covered with a veil as transparent as a diamond, if such a texture could be woven, while His raiment looks like fine linen." "The soul to whom God grants this vision almost always falls into an ecstasy, nature being too weak to bear so dread a sight. I say 'dread'; though this apparition is more lovely and delightful than anything that could be imagined, even though any one should live a thousand years and spend all his time in trying to picture it; for it far surpasses our limited imagination and understanding."

"God places the soul in His own mansion, which is in the very center of the soul itself. They say the empyreal heavens, wherein our Lord dwells, do not revolve with the rest: So the accustomed movements of the faculties and imagination do not appear to take place in any way that can injure the soul or disturb its peace."

Nor do they admit of imitation, whether from demon or clairvoyant:

"This touch of knowledge and sweetness is so strong and so profound that it penetrates into the inmost substance of the soul, and the demon cannot interfere with it nor produce anything like it, because there is nothing else compatible with it, nor infuse any sweetness or delight which at all resembles it."[12]

BEATIFIC VISION . . . . DIRECT INTUITION DIVINISATION . . . . (APOTHEOSIS)

But all these elevations of soul, though they carry us well out of the body and into the discarnate world of pure essences, still speak to us of human methods of seeing, in that they postulate some created "species" in the mind of the seer, through which the Infinite is intued. Even the sublimest give evidence of a reflected light rather than a self-luminous Brilliancy, one which *must* annihilate all created forms for its adequate assimilation. We cannot turn a polygon into a circle without the redoubtable *dx*,—a violent transition! (Infinitesimal Calculus).

Such a transition is effected only by the *death* of the body, if we except the Beatific Vision of the Saviour by which, even in mortal life, He always "beheld the face of His Father who is in heaven."

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED[13]

The Voice that spoke at the Baptism, with its heavenly Dove, was but a passing reminder of what was a permanent and habitual condition of His soul. To what extent the visions of Moses, Elias and others give evidence of a similar, though temporary elevation is a disputed question, many holding that they were actually beatific, though only for short periods.

---

[10] Dan. 8, 27; Apoc. 1, 17. [11] Supra, p. 28ff. [12] St. Teresa, Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, 9, 3; Seventh Mansion, 2, 12; St. John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 24, 6; 26, 5. [13] Matt. 3, 17.

But for most of us anything approaching to a seeing of God on this side of the Styx would be a presumptuous hope for which there is no antecedent. What has rarely, if ever, been granted to the greatest saints is not likely to be granted to us, and we must learn to do without it. Where also would be the difference between ourselves *and* the saints, let alone the Savior, if such a vision were a cheap commodity to be easily purchased by the highest bidder? It is a good thing to realise *where* we stand, sullied and sin-laiden as we are. You do not let a tramp into your parlor. 'God bless the squire and his relations, to keep us in our proper stations.'

We may, however, cast a loving and longing glance into that Great Beyond which will be ours only if we realise its transcendence,—the direct vision of God *face to face*, without smoked glasses and without the scholastic 'species.' This is a phase of the hereafter which modern spiritism is sadly in need of imbibing, all too busy as it is with its fancy-forms and its fairy-queens, its tambourines and tomfoolery. It is like mistaking the fringe of a garment for the august wearer. Let it be written up on the doors of every psychic laboratory, that "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man (to conceive) the things that the Lord hath prepared for them that love him.*"[14] This hits our own "lower" phenomena no less than those of the mediums, but with this difference,—that we regard the phenomenal as a mere stepping-stone to the spiritual, or at most its clothing, while mediumism lets everything terminate in the material form, the grossly sensational. Moreover, if the Infinite could be humanly pictured, He would cease to be the God Almighty, the Everlasting Father, the Nameless One. We must pass from ether to 'super-ether' if we would reach the Divine essence:

"*Elias, our father, covered his face on the mountain in the presence of God. By that action he taught us that he made his understanding blind, not venturing to apply an instrument so vile to a matter so high; and that he perceived clearly that, however much he saw and understood, all would be most unlike unto God and far distant from Him.*"[15]

The most ecstatic thrill is tameness compared to the "glory that shall be revealed," to a single ray that issues from that Galaxy of Love.

THE SUPER-MARVELOUS

But we would be little better than Buddhists or Neo-Brahminists were we to insinuate that such a 'divinisation' involved the loss of personality and of our integral human nature,—a kind of pantheistic 'absorption' in the Divine in which mind and matter are engulfed in the great World-Soul,—a swallowing up of all individual traits in the boundless ocean of the Infinite. The Son of God would never have become *man*, conquered the tomb and carried His human body into the skies, were it not His purpose to preserve that nature to all eternity, to raise both soul and body to a higher plane,—an integral state of celestial happiness. And so He has given the favored few a foretaste, more or less vivid, of what nature herself can never bring about, the union of the beatified soul with the glorified body, a compenetration of the spiritual by the material which makes this body of flesh a thing of infinite dignity, not to be thrown away or 'cremated,' but to be purged and prepared for its sublime destiny. A word of warning to all theosophists and 'esoteric' mystics who would cast a slur upon what they call a 'material' theology! According to Suarez, one third of the angelic host fell into hell through refusing to adore the Sacred Humanity of Christ, shown to them in a vision,—and this should come as a curb to our miserable Manichaeans and Monophysites.[16]

"*One thing, however, I have to say: If in heaven itself there were nothing else to delight the eyes but the great beauty of glorified bodies, that would be an excessive bliss, particularly the vision of the Humanity of Jesus Christ our Lord.*"[17]

---

[14] I Cor. 2, 9. [15] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 8, 5.
[16] Suarez, De Angelis, VII, 13. [17] St. Teresa, Life, XXVIII, 4.

It is the Incarnation which gives the lie to a soul-less Deism; and to this extent modern Spiritualism has hit upon one important truth, however inadequately,—that the body shall share with the soul the glory of a never-ending blessedness.

ASSUMPTION . . . . (ANALEMPSIS)

I need not delay on the Translation of Enoch or the Assumption of Elias, as these are too far off to appeal to a twentieth century public.

"*And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.*" . . . "*My father, my father! The chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof.*"[18]

But I seriously propound the solemn question, by what logic these levitations or liftings into the superworld are consigned to the region of romance simply because they are remote and not accessible to our more immediate historical or scientific control. Would not a similar argument hit the evangelical data, where, by the way mention is made of these "two witnesses" as both preceding and following the Messiah with unheard-of wonders? And where are we to call a halt to the march of the supernatural? If Christ ascended above the high heavens, why not His august predecessors? Those who deny the former will be apt to dismiss the latter. But those who accept the former cannot deny the latter without gravely impugning the veracity of the Savior and the continuity of the chain of supernatural manifestations. It is a case of live or die with the entire record.

In the same way the Assumption of the Virgin, though of less vital import, cannot be divorced from the general scheme and providential disposals of the Divine Economy. She who bore an incorruptible Being in her own body would not be likely to suffer corruption *in* that body, though she might pass through death. In all these matters we must be guided by antecedents no less than consequents. St. John's vision of the "*woman clothed with the sun*" would have little meaning if the Heavenly Mother lay putrefying in the grave; and such has been the tradition of the highest Christian antiquity.[19]

ASCENSION . . . . (ANABASIS)

More directly attested, that is, by the united college of apostles, is the lifting up of the Saviour at the close of His earthly mission and His translation in a cloud of glory to the mansions of the eternal Father. This also is part and parcel of a record which cannot be broken up into real and ideal fragments. If the risen Lord was truly seen in the flesh for forty days, He must have left the world in a rather remarkable manner. "*All power is given unto me, in heaven and on earth.*"

With these words he bids farewell to His little flock and, like Elias, He throws His spiritual 'mantle' upon their shoulders. Where did He disappear to? It is incredible that He who had been seen, heard, touched and felt, on so many occasions and by so many parties should have simply hid himself or vanished to die an unknown death. The very thought of it is preposterous.

There is only one answer that is available. He who had passed through solid walls and had walked on the troubled sea, was now visibly levitated in the sight of His astonished followers and ethereally, that is, instantly 'apported' to what Dante and St. Thomas described as the "empyrean," or the ninth heaven. In this the Angelic Doctor takes due cognisance of the passage of the Body through a vacuum of vast and immeasureable dimensions,—the regions of interstellar space. This was accomplished by its 'dematerialisation' or loss of external quantity, and followed by its 'rematerialisation' or resumption of dimensional quantity before the great White Throne. Since that time the Body of Christ has existed "circumscriptively" only in Heaven, though it may exist "sacramentally," or after a spiritual manner, in a million different points of created space. It has all been

[18] Gen. 5, 24; 4 Kings 2, 12. [19] Apoc. 12, 1ff.

thought out and answered hundreds of years before Zöllner wrote his "Transcendental Physics."[20]

Can such a power be in any way shared by mortal man, and to what extent is it supported or confirmed by collateral evidence? It *can* be shared and it *has* been shared, though only by very exceptional spirits; and from this point of view the disappearance of the Messiah from the terrestrial 'air' furnishes a valid presumption for a similar disappearance of His "two witnesses" from the scenes of their earthly labors, not to speak of the very congruous assumption of His own Mother. Mary, Enoch and Elias form in this respect a triad, powerfully illuminated by the ascended Saviour.

On the other hand, there is no authentic instance of a similar translation in the lives of any other saints or prophets, least of all in the shady exhibitions of the séance-room. No living medium has ever dematerialised on the spot and carried her living body into another world! Nevertheless, the modern phenomena of apport, levitation, bilocation or distant form-projection, furnish, as I have said, a valuable precedent for marvels of a far higher order. When genuine, they tend to silence the lips of the profane scoffer.[21]

RESURRECTION . . . . (ANASTASIS)

And this brings us to the allied subject of the reanimation of the dead body in the tomb and its rise to a new life of glory,—the classic Resurrection. This is of all wonders the most widely appreciated by humanity at large, as it promises that much-desired continuity of form and feature which many regard as so essential to any happiness in the life to come.

"*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth . . . and I shall be clothed again with my skin . . . . and out of my flesh shall I see God.*"[22]

It is well known that this text admits of a variety of uncertain readings, and for this reason it is not safe to draw too much prophetical material out of its doubtful wording. But that it foreshadows an actual gathering together of the scattered atoms of a former "temple" of the Holy Ghost is made fairly evident by the testimony of the Redeemer to His own Body:

"*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up.*"[23]

It will surely be allowed that the Christ who was taken from the Cross and carefully laid in the sealed tomb was *somatically* the identical Christ that appeared to that long string of witnesses beginning with that first Easter morning. To say that the Body had been carried away, or stolen, or even burnt, as some have intimated, is to play havoc with the intense consciousness *one and the same* Saviour which could easily be knocked to pieces by simply 'showing him up' or pointing to a confused heap of ashes, 'Here is your famous Messiah . . . . . We have cremated Him!' St. Peter's sermon on the risen, incorruptible Christ would have ended in a sad fiasco if some one had rushed up, as he then might have done, and boldly refuted the story. They absolutely could not do so; or we may be quite sure that something like this would certainly have occurred. Then also His eating and drinking in the restored Body and His pointing out of the Five Precious Wounds was done with the special purpose of publicly identifying the mortal with the immortal Christ:

"*Peace be unto you.*" . . . "*A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*"[24]

"*Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing.*" . . . "*My Lord and my God!*"[25]

---

[20] St. Thomas, Sum. Theol. III, q. 57, (on ascensions and assumptions); q. 76 (on different modes of bodily presence). Compare Tanquerey, Synops. Theol. Dogm. Vol. II, De Mysterio Praesentiae Realis, Nos. 50–54; Suarez, De Euchar. disp. 48; Franzelin, de Euchar. thes. 11.

[21] See above, p. 52ff. [22] Job 19, 25. [23] Matt. 26, 61; John 2, 19.

[24] Luke 24, 39. [25] John 20, 27-28.

If anything was ever attested by an army of unimpeachable witnesses, it was the identity of the certainly dead with the certainly risen and glorified Saviour. Rival theories of swoon or imposture mutually cancel each other. And this power of *raising himself* has passed to no other being, though the faculty of raising *others*, such as the entombed Lazarus, has only been given to the few, who, like Elias of old or some of the early saints and apostles, occupied an extraordinary position in the redemptive plan.

Hence we do not place the reported 'resurrections' of our modern saints and soul-doctors upon such an unassailable level, as they cannot always be brought to book and there is often the possibility that "the maiden is not dead, but sleepeth." However, the existence of one single case of authentic life-restoration makes all others possible; and from this point of view they and those weird 'callings out of the trance' to which more than one priest or medical practitioner can testify must always remain a powerful asset in favor of a real though very rare recall of a soul that has crossed the boundary. "*Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*"

After this it is hardly necessary to point out that what the saints can rarely effect is not likely to be easily performed by the more common fry of humanity. Hypnotism stands aghast at it, while mediumism is out of the reckoning. We require, as I have said, a power that is working *against* the trance, not one that will throw the patient into a still deeper stupor. Besides, this is not the case of a trance but of a definite transition,—the reunion of a living soul with a certainly dead corpse. And this is the one point that has been missed by our necromantic wizards, with their ever-returning 'Katies.' Resurrection implies more than a reappearance on the 'astral,' though this may be a halting-place for those who are infatuated by the discarnate double. Mrs. Eddy and Madame Blavatsky are rapidly rotting away in the grave in spite of all their powerful thinking, while St. John of the Cross still shines with his heavenly countenance in the cathedral of Segovia. To rise from the dead means a bursting of all seals, slabs and monuments and a reassumption of the scattered dust by the ideal form. It finds its antecedents in a mystery which defies all detectives and Conan Doyles,—the Empty Tomb![26]

THE DIVINE 'GLORY'

TRANSFIGURATION . . . . (METAMORPHOSIS)

But if the Resurrection has a seemingly carnal aspect as dealing with the "flesh," it is none the less eloquent of a bodily sublimation to which nothing in this life can be adequately compared. Subtility, clarity, agility, impassibility,—such properties convert the old-time body into what is almost a diaphanous spirit, a thing of light, lightness and levitational force. This reaches its climax in the Transfiguration, where all the wonders of the superworld seem to meet,—lucidity, levitation, glorification, beatific vision.

"*And He was transfigured before them . . and His face did shine as the sun and His raiment became white as the light . . (exceeding white as snow, such as no fuller on earth can white them) . . and there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him . . . and a bright cloud overshadowed them . . . and, behold a voice came out of the cloud, saying:*

'THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR HIM!'"[27]

Whatever may have been the nature of this mysterious vision, it was a realistic and wide-awake experience in which three mortal men were brought face to face with three immortals, One of whom was still to die as a voluntary holocaust. The insinuation that the three apostles were mediums who fell into trance and produced the spiritistic 'arch' expressed by the "cloud of glory," is too trifling to be taken

[26] Compare J. H. Hyslop, Psychical Research and the Resurrection (New York, 1908), for an inadequate estimate. [27] Matt. 17, 1–9; Mark 9, 2–10; Luke 9, 28–36.

seriously.[28] It is expressly stated that they saw the vision "when they were awake," that they were fully conscious when Peter spoke; and to compare the cloud of glory with the ectoplastic 'string' is quite ridiculous.[29] Moreover the spectacle was not of a soft and subdued shimmer, but of a blinding brilliancy, "brighter than the sun"; and this separates it from all occult 'transfigurations' of the most daring character. No 'materialised form' can for a moment approach it.[30]

THE DIVINE 'FIRE'
TRANSVERBERATION . . . . (METAPLASTESIS)

But if this experience of the Saviour and His greatest Saints is evidently unique, it is not so celestial as to be altogether incommunicable, but only to those higher visionaries who have made *Him* the central focus of their lives and gone with Him into His Holy Mountain. The early anchorites and Fathers of the Desert tell of many an ecstasy which seems to have flown over upon the senses and saturated them with Heavenly Light. Also, the later mediaeval and modern mystics speak of a 'Transverberation,' or a physical 'trembling' of the body, which, in combination with a trembling of the soul, would seem to induce the state of 'Divine Fire,'—a mysterious 'burning' or a mystical 'consumption' in which the body no less than the soul has its proportionate share. Of this St. Peter Alcantara and St. Margaret Mary of the Sacred Heart are powerful examples, as they were forced to loosen their garments to release the Divine Fire that consumed them! The stigmata of St. Francis are a heroic instance.

As an illustration of the nature and interior character of this Fire we may take the Transverberation of the Heart of St. Teresa, which will show at a glance how *realistic* is the experience and how inexplicable by natural causes:

"*I saw an angel close beside me, on my left-hand side, in bodily form. . . . He was not large, but small of stature, and most beautiful . . . his face burning, as if he were one of the highest-angels, who seemed to be all on fire: they must be those whom we call cherubim.*"

"*I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the iron's point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart and to pierce my very entrails. And when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God.*"

"*The pain was so great that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain, that I could not wish to get rid of it . . . . The pain is not bodily, but spiritual, though the body has its share in it . . . . I pray God in His goodness to make him experience it who may think that I am lying.*"[31]

And,—what is most wonderful of all,—this Heart of St. Teresa, known as the 'Window of Heaven,' is still to be seen in the Monastery of Alba, preserved incorrupt! It has been pronounced "a marvellous mirror of all-powerful Divinity, in which are reflected miraculous images such as are only to be considered as supernatural."[32]

THE DIVINE 'LIGHT'
TRANSLUCIDATION . . . . (METAPHAINESIS)

And it is here precisely that the Kingdom of Light is marked off so forcibly from the realm of shades. For what the psychics can strain after but never attain is reserved for the *Shechinah* or the "Splendor of God" and is incommunicable to mortal man except by way of extraordinary privilege. Such a "metamorphosis" or change into the likeness of God is the prerogative only of His special intimates. It may be imparted to these His servants or it may accompany His own sacramental Presence. I give but one illustration out of many others that might be furnished.

---

[28] Contra: Conan Doyle, et al. [29] Luke 9, 32ff.
[30] Contra: Schrenck-Notzing, Phenomena of Materialisation (1920), passim.
[31] Life, c. XXIX, 16–18. [32] Abbé Marie Joseph, St. Teresa of Jesus (1884), p. 152, 155ff.

"*While he was praying for help, he saw a wonderful light, out of which came a voice saying, 'Follow me.' He obeyed. The light moved from him to the highest part of the wall, and then, he knew not how, he found himself on the summit of it, without effort or fatigue. It had been so brilliant that for two or three days afterwards his eyes were weak, as if they had been looking at the midday sun.*"[33] This has the appearance of a Pauline trance-vision; but there are others that more directly affect the subject and throw a supernatural halo around his person:

"*While at Caravaca, the nuns saw rays of light around him at the altar, and the prioress, Mother Ann of St. Albert, asked him in the confessional what had happened to him while at the altar. He replied at once that God revealed himself to his soul with such force that he could hardly complete the sacrifice, and that he was occasionally afraid to say Mass.*"[34]

At other times the radiance seemed to come from the saint *and* the transfigured Sacrament, if we may use such a word to describe the following:

"*As soon as he ascended the steps of the altar the prioress saw a light around the servant of God which became more and more brilliant as he went on with the Mass . . . At first it seemed to come out of the tabernacle . . . After the consecration it emanated from the Sacred Host, and the priest in the midst of the light seemed to shine as the most clear sun . . . The Mass lasted very long, but it was a wonderful joy to all the nuns, whose eyes were fountains of sweet tears.*"[35]

"*Father,*" the prioress asked, "*why has the Mass lasted so long? When we taste of divine things a long time seems short. Perhaps you had a vision.*"

"*I saw,*" replied the saint, "*what you too have been allowed to see.*"

"*I should like to know what you saw,*" the prioress said, "*for it hindered you in the saying of the Mass; you were a long time at the altar.*"

"*So it was, child,*" said the saint, and then there was a silence, for he fell into a trance. But when he returned to himself, he said, "*God showed great things to me, a sinner, and that in such majesty that I am unable to proceed.*"[36]

I offer these anecdotes at greater length because they constitute a psychological *ensemble* which is rarely met with in the records of hagiology. Coupled with the mysterious "dove" that was often seen hovering over the saint, these items bring us very near the gospel transfiguration, though we must make due allowance for the human equation and for defective transmission. Visions, voices, lights, celestial doves,—all seem to be represented. But as to the "trance," I have just intimated that such a "soul-trance" involves a vastly different set of psychical fore- and aftermaths than is requisitioned by the occult control. Even if some of the external symptoms might be similar, such as fainting or falling on the face, this was evidently not the accompaniment of the Savior's ecstasy nor of the saint's rapture as he offered the Holy Sacrifice. Human nature of course is weak; but its sustentation in the teeth of such a tremendous strain on the vital forces must be put down as candidly and unconditionally miraculous.

And with this we have arrived at the greatest sensible marvel that can well be granted to our fallen race,—the Transfiguration of the Saints and the Translucidation of the Sacred Host. Indeed, it is a question whether these are well described as 'sensible' phenomena, as they lift the eye of the flesh beyond its natural plane of vision and bring it into the super-ether. This is hinted at by the gospel statement that "*when they had lifted up their eyes,*" that is, when they had come out of the rapture, "*they saw no man save Jesus only.*"[37] It takes an elevation above the normal or even the natural to see these things; and this will account for the fact that visions of this kind are confined as a rule to a rather limited area and given only to very exceptional personalities. If they were common sights and every-day occurrences, they would cease to be supernatural intuitions of the miraculous kind. "No man hath seen God at any time," and even theosophy

[33] Heriz, St. John of the Cross, p. 100–101. [34] Ibid., p. 118.
[35] Ibid., p. 118. [36] Ibid., p. 147–148. [37] Matt. 17, 8.

teaches that the "pure white light" cannot be intued by natural man on this side of the great divide; it belongs to a different sphere of existence.[38]

Nevertheless, it would savor of a sad want of logic and critical power could we not distinguish what is grossly material and carnal from what is more subtle and ethereal but none the less *intensely real* in its extramental manifestations. In this sense the Blessed Sacrament might be called a 'potential' miracle in that it contains the silent promise of lifting the veil and revealing itself to the five senses of man. The voluminous evidence to this effect in the lives of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. Catherine of Sienna, of St. Rose of Lima and St. Angela of Foligno, of St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Louis of France,—not to speak of the Margaret Marys and the Miraculous Hosts of our own times,—leaves no room for doubt that, when the phenomena are viewed in their totality, something external and realistic must be postulated to account for such an overwhelming body of witnesses to a fact that has often been certified by secular persons and under the least excitable conditions.[39] It is therefore not surprising that, even as the demons can bear witness to the Godhead of Christ, additional testimony on this head should come to us from a rather unexpected quarter. Here is a specimen: "In a recently published book entitled *Miadoxia*, the author, a 'Priest,' speaking of the Reserved Sacrament, says that '*sensitive psychics are at once aware of its presence, and some even assert that a brilliant radiance emanates from it.*'"[40] Pathetic tribute at the eleventh hour to what others have seen in the noon of day! In any case, the revelations of the Y-ray prepare us for that Transcendental Light of which the materialised form is but the outer garment:

"*And so, when I speak of the union of the soul with God, I do not mean this substantial presence which is in every creature, but that union and transformation of the soul in God by love which is only then accomplished when there subsists the likeness which love begets.*"[41]

If then the senses of man are more than satisfied by these vivid impressions from the world beyond, it should never be forgotten that the Light of Glory has a finally super-sensible terminus; it refuses to halt in the phenomenal and the phantastic. It is a power which saturates the entire system with the direct knowledge and love of its Supreme Object.

This is well expressed by the Seraphic Mother when speaking of the Divine Omnipresence:

"*Let us suppose the Godhead to be a most brilliant diamond, much larger than the whole world . . . and that all our actions are seen in that diamond . . . It was a fearful thing for me to see, in so short a time, so many things together in that brilliant diamond . . . and to see such foul things as my sins in the pure brilliancy of that Light.*"[42]

As a modern writer would insinuate,—"it is like being suddenly lifted into a fourth dimension"; or, as the blessed Dionysius has described it, the famous 'Areopagite':

"*The Divine Gloom is the unapproachable Light in which God is said to dwell. And into this gloom, invisible indeed on account of its surpassing brightness, and unapproachable on account of the excess of the super-essential stream of Light, enters every one deemed worthy to know and to see God.*"[43]

---

[38] Curtiss, The Key to the Universe, p. 84. The Voice of Isis, p. 360.

[39] Compare in this connection the material collected by Görres, Die Christliche Mystik, Vol. I–V; Faber, The Blessed Sacrament, pp. 516–548. Benedict XIV, Heroic Virtue, III, 300–302. Also an article on "Sacramental Telekinesis" in the "Month" (June, 1919), p. 401ff, by Herbert Thurston, S. J.

[40] E. Clodd, Article "Occultism," in the Hibbert Journal for Jan., 1922, p. 263. Ibidem, on the nimbus, halo, cloudlike vestment, transfiguration, etc., p. 262. Ibid., Article "Materialism and Occultism," by E. W. Cook, p. 269ff.

[41] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 5, 3. [42] Life, XL, 14.

[43] Pratt, Psychology of Religious Belief, (1916), p. 161ff; quoting the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Letter to Dorotheus (Parker's Edition), pp. 8, 144.

Even those of fractured faiths have felt the pulse of Emerson's 'Over-Soul,' soiled though it is by an irrational pantheism:

"For ever and for ever, the influx of this better and universal Self is new and unsearchable . . . So come I to live in thoughts and to act with energies which are immortal!"[44]

But much of this is more of a mystical feeling than an immediate intuition. It can never be made to approach the strictly supernatural plane of experiences we have just referred to.

THE PARAMOUNT ISSUE

We see then that the combined phenomena of the saints and spiritual wondermen,—heroes who, like St. Joan of Arc or St. Francis Xavier, are canonised by the vote of humanity no less than by ecclesiastical court,—exceed by a large margin what is offered us in the name of mediumism on the one hand or higher psychism on the other. This is specially the case with St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, whose levitations and translucidations remain untouched by any profane marvels of the most baffling description. Below the plane of the normal life, the disordered dream is corrected by the Joseph-vision, the distempered trance by the Saul-Samuel vision, while the hysterical swoons and demoniacal obsessions are cancelled by the saints' and the Savior's exorcisms, by His descent into Hell and His release of the spirits in prison. Above that plane we have seen telepathy dissolve in the Pauline vision and clairvoyance in the Johannine vision, while divination melts away before the Prophetic vision and divinisation before the Beatific vision. In each case the lower terms have a double meaning and must be purged of their perverted, pantheistic implications before they can be made to do the duty of descriptive epithets. On the pragmatic side the moving pencil is eclipsed by the prophetic wand, the phosphorescent script by the fire-writing, partial levitation by complete assumption, form-mutation by transsubstantiation, somatic radiation by heavenly transfiguration. There remains to point out more clearly how the lower is separated from the higher, and by what signs the spirit of prophesy, that is, the Spirit of God, may be infallibly recognised.

In this connection I venture to suggest the following points which mark off the divine from the demonic with sufficient force to be applied by any careful observer. I use the word 'demonic' in the Socratic sense, approved by Görres, as connoting all that is not definitely supernatural, whether it be natural, preternatural, or directly diabolical or demoniacal.

THE THREEFOLD ANAPHEROSIS

(1) THE SUBLIMATION OF THE SENSES

That the saints do not reject the sensible or the material is made abundantly evident by their frequent appeals to external, visible phenomena no less than the Sacred Humanity of Christ. He who had come in His double nature came to lift that human nature, not to destroy it. Nevertheless, all regard it as dangerous to halt in the merely material; and here is the first cleavage-point between the grand and the grotesque, the sensible and the sensational, the phenomenal and the phantastic. An apparition which simply tickles the fancy and even allows itself to be kissed by the most questionable parties must always remain gravely suspicious in the whence or whither of its ultimate domicile. To receive the stigmata is a rather different ordeal from that of paying tribute to 'Katie King,' though we must not be too hard on the innocent frivolities of human nature.

But the mystics are loud in denouncing an excessive softness which sometimes eats its way into the most pious love-rapture. It is the sweetest wine that is the

[44] The Works of Walter Emerson, Vol. II, p. 297.

quickest to turn sour; and while sensible delectation is *per se* legitimate, it is in continual need of a purge and a powerful counter-irritant to prevent its emasculation. For this reason the Church no less than the saints counsel the use of the fine arts as an antidote to the grossly carnal. The altar, the crucifix, the lights, the incense, the symbolic vestments, the ostensorium,—all tend to raise the senses to a purer level of intuition, while in the sacred chant we discern the most powerful spiritual dynamic by which the soul is lifted into the empyrean:

"*I am moved to tears by her prayers . . . melted to pieces by her mystic chants . . . I am intoxicated by this atmosphere of wax and incense!*"[1]

Even the sternest ascetics leave ample play for the esthetic faculty as the most efficient lever for lifting the soul to higher flights:

"*Whenever, in hearing music or other agreeable sounds, in smelling sweet odors, in tasting what is delicious, in touching what is soothing, the affections of the will rise consciously in an instant unto God, and that movement gives us more pleasure than the sensible occasion of it, and when we have no pleasure in that cause, but because of its effects, that is a sign of profit, and that the objects of sense minister unto the spirit.*"[2]

And when those same emotions put the subject into trance or ecstasy, some derangement of the lower system is often called for; but it is here precisely that we note its manifest differences from the hypnotic control.

(*a*) In the **demonic** trance the senses are not only *suspended* but *disorganised*. It is the sign of a purely natural ecstasy if the condition is brought on artificially, if it recurs at stated intervals, and if the patient loses his self-control by exhibiting various disorderly movements in the body, with incipient symptoms of paralysis, apoplexy or locomotor ataxy; when, moreover, the countenance becomes pale and livid and spiritual depression ensues; when the ecstasy is followed by lassitude, inertness of limbs, heaviness of mind, intellectual density and loss of memory; when, in short the physical condition is definitely and permanently worse than it was before the trance.[3] To what extent this applies to mediums and natural psychics we have seen above. Few of our modern trance-speakers are not more or less neurotic, while none can be called strong and robust subjects.

"*I have a feeling of numbness . . . my arms and my body seem to stiffen and shake . . . I am overcome with nausea . . . all the next day I must take a rest*" . . . "*As a rule I have observed the steady downward course of mediums who sit regularly,*"—testimonies that come from reliable witnesses.[4]

This is carried still further in the diabolic ecstasy which is accompanied by catalepsy, swooning, foaming at the mouth and other violent antics:

"*He clenched his hands, gnashed his teeth, crouched on the floor, and appeared to be fighting violently with some unpleasant influence.*"[5]

Contra :

(*b*) In the **divine** trance, the senses are not so much *suspended* as *sublimated*. And by this I mean that, while their lower functions are to some extent impaired and at times cut off, such an inhibition is at most temporary and is immediately commuted to higher values. The saint sees and hears things on a higher level, which level flows over upon the senses in the normal state. It is not denied that a good deal of this is mixed up with the natural and pathological. The mystics are well aware of it. They are frequently fighting off what they themselves have gone through,—an apparent swooning, a fainting away, and even a catalepsy. But when these have been overcome and eliminated, they find themselves armed with a bodily vigor in which the halting of the breath or the suppression of the lower functions comes as a directive sign, not a diseased symptom. Such a mystical

---

[1] Huysmans, En Route, p. 22. Idem, La Cathédrale, passim.

[2] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, III, 24, 3.

[3] In substance, the doctrine of Benedict XIV, in his "Treatise on Beatification and Canonisation." Compare Joly, Psychology of the Saints, p. 87ff. [4] Supra, p. 28. [5] Ibidem.

'death' does not always bring on a physical collapse. On the contrary, it is more often followed by a sharpening up of the senses and a stimulation of the vital factors for which we look in vain in the records of the necromantic art.

"*Though the body is often infirm and full of suffering before ecstasy, it comes out of ecstasy full of health and admirably prepared for action.*"

"*I mean that, when this profound suspension diminishes, the body seems to come to itself and gain strength, to return again to this 'death' which gives more vigorous 'life' to the soul.*"

"*He perfects in them the bodily senses enlightens them, spiritualises them.*"[6]

Holiness, health and hilarity are apt to be found together; and when this is not the case, the sickness is accepted as a transitory purge or a penitential visitation by which the soul is tried in the crucible of suffering. Indeed, the discipline of pain is a necessary step to every spiritual privilege.[7]

And this is the place to call attention to a much-neglected aphorism: *Mens sana in corpore sano.* Naturally and normally speaking, there can be no question that a clean and careful life is conducive to a high degree of health and sanity on the part of the liver. A sound mentality, coupled with a vigorous physique, is often the reward of a ruthless suppression of the lower appetites. Even a severely ascetical discipline is apt to produce a longevity which is rather out of the ordinary, as witness the example of St. Simon Stock, the famous English Carmelite, who lived to the age of 104 on the sparsest vegetable fare. All modern physicians counsel fasting and abstinence as the most efficient cure for many physical ailments; and who can deny that the bloom and vigor of youth is a powerful engine for the putting through of many a strong and strenuous undertaking?

Yet with all this, it still remains everlastingly true that sickness and suffering are the necessary lot of all mortals here below, nay, that the most heroic souls have joyfully courted a short and painful life as a voluntary holocaust. The Crucifix stands as an eternal protest to those who make a fetich out of muscle and membrane, while the story of Calvary will have to be rewritten for those self-sufficient epicureans who worship at that delusive shrine,—'Science and Health.' There is always a possible relic of a sound, though sad philosophy in the opposite principle: 'Whom the gods love, die young,'—an equally deplorable overstatement.

(2) THE SUBLIMATION OF THE INTELLECT

But if the senses become an easy prey to delusions, and hence to diabolic controls, this is less the case with the mental powers, though here also we must distinguish between true and false intellection, the genuine acquisition of real illuminative knowledge and the feigned assimilation of much that seems true enough but is mixed up with the false, the fragmentary and the phantastic. An 'intellectual' vision belongs to a higher order, but never to such an extent that it cannot be made the vehicle of a partial knowledge which is sometimes more fatal than none at all.

"*If it be granted that these apprehensions are of a higher kind, more profitable and much more safe than those which are corporeal and imaginary because they are interior, purely spiritual and less liable to the intrusions of satan and because they are communications of God to the soul in the greatest pureness and subtility, independently of, at least, any active operations of the soul or of the imagination;—still the understanding may not be only embarrassed by them, but, because of its incautiousness, greatly deluded.*"[8]

That a high price is placed upon genuine science is proved by such intellectual giants as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, Avicenna and Albert the Great,

---

[6] St. Teresa, Life, p. 208; Joly, op. cit., p. 88–100; Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, 4, 17; Ascent, II, 17, 3.

[7] Compare "The Privilege of Pain," by Mrs. Leo Everett (Boston, 1920),—my poor sister!

[8] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 23, 4.

Roger Bacon and Copernicus,—the fathers of much that goes by the name of modern 'inductive' or classified knowledge.[9]

"*Always I have loved the society of scholars. How great a treasure is science!*"—says St. Teresa. But the piling up of mere natural learning is after all trifling compared with that higher science of the soul which comes to us by a direct contact with the Divine Source of light; and it is here especially that the prophetic and the profane must be kept apart with extraordinary caution.

(*a*) In the **demonic** trance the intellect is not sharpened but *stupefied*. While we willingly allow that 'supernormal' knowledge has been, or may be acquired by many a psychic or sensitive of telepathic or 'clairvoyant' fame, this knowledge, though immediate, is seen, as it were, in a fog and rarely without the intrusion of some kind of fraud, falsity or self-contradiction. It is never sealed, certain, or infallible, though it may be plausible enough as far as it goes. Moreover, when the mind is in the subliminal order, as happens in the mediumistic trance, such knowledge is purchased at the expense of 'heaviness of mind, intellectual density and loss of memory,' as we have just noted.[10] It enters in fact into the *sub*-conscious state, where it is completely at the mercy of every incitation, even the most frivolous. That such is really the case, has been amply illustrated. The medium not only forgets all that was uttered in the hypnotic sleep, but her mental equipment suffers a grave, sometimes a permanent impairment. Such persons have certainly never enlightened the world, nor have they left us anything but a few questionable peeps into the hereafter which the saints can surpass in a thousand ways. Nay more, there is often a splitting up or a disaggregation of personality of so violent a kind that to talk of a mental or spiritual elevation is grimly sarcastic:

"*She falls into true convulsions . . . she cries out like a woman that is lying in . . . she is overcome by hallucinations and by delirium.*"[11]

In the diabolic trance, to which this is a close approach, these mutterings become gravely disordered and the mental equilibrium is in imminent danger of being permanently lost. It is a pandemonium of the perverse:

"*O Dr. Prince, save me from myself, and from whatever it is that is so absolutely merciless. I can bear anything but this mocking devil.*"[12]

This does not imply, of course, that no knowledge is available in this traumatic state. It is available, and is only too deftly used by the controlling spirits to intimidate and finally to ruin their unconscious victim.[13]

Contra:

(*b*) In the **divine** trance, on the other hand, the intellect is not only sharpened, but *elevated*. By this is meant that the mind is clearer and crisper, more cunning and comprehensive after the vision than it was before, while during the trance its discursive operations are halted, but its intuitional powers are so far from being suppressed that they are sublimated, that is, transmuted to grander and more efficient values. It has a wider sweep of reality; it sees and knows more of the causes and conditions of things; it has a more delicate perception of eternal relations. Through this "night" of the lower self it reaches out to that "light" of infused intellection which, active in the lower chambers, is productively passive in the upper part of the soul; it brings forth that quiescence of beatific repose in which the faculties of knowledge and love are enormously strengthened and stimulated, not scattered or squandered over a vague and undefinable area. There is a definite concentration upon an equally definite and sublime goal. And, what is yet more important, there is continuity of personality; the saint preserves his selfhood throughout; there is no splitting up of the ego, still less a forced or alienistic obsession. This is proved by the coherence and continuity of his revelations and by the fact that he remembers their contents in the normal state and can give a

[9] Joly, Psychology of the Saints, p. 129–141. [10] P. 69. [11] Supra, p. 28.
[12] Supra, p. 30. [13] Raupert, op. cit., p. 53ff.

genuinely rational account of what has transpired. In this sense he is not *un*conscious at all except to the disturbing impressions of the moment. He is, as I venture to describe it, in a *super*-conscious state, a condition of mental elevation in which the lower avenues of the soul are for the time closed, while its upper channels are inundated by an ocean of pure contemplation which does not mix well with the brackish waters of the commonplace or the polluted waters of the diseased. This is made particularly plain by Joly in his masterful analysis of the subject:

"*Unlike nervous diseases, sanctity is not a 'disintegration' of the powers of the mind; it is an 'aggregation' of the closest possible kind, which derives its strength from a higher principle, under the control of which it forms and sustains itself. It is not a 'narrowing of the field of consciousness,' but rather the opening out of a wider field, although it is true that this opening out is at the cost, if we may use the expression, of a narrowing of the field of passing sensations and empty illusions.*"

"*Neither is it a 'division of personality,' although it certainly creates a new personality, and that at the cost of great sacrifice and much suffering. This new personality is not a medley of divided and disordered parts. It exhibits a cohesion, a strength and a unity above anything else which psychology can show us. This new personality also retains whatever was best in the old personality, and these surviving elements combine peacefully with the new.*"[14]

Or, as Devine puts it, "the apparent vacuum in the mind is filled up by visions, sometimes purely intellectual, which are rather an intense realisation of the presence of God,"; they demand both intention and attention.[15] This is brought out by the testimony of the saints to their own illuminations:

"*I have noticed that the soul has never more light to understand the things of God than in this sort of rapture. But if anyone asks me how it is that, while our faculties and senses are as much suspended as if they were dead, we are able to hear or understand anything, I can only answer that this is a secret which God has, with many another, reserved to Himself.*"

"*I cannot tell the reason, but the infirmity formerly so troublesome to the mind and impossible to get over, disappears at once.*"[16]

"*When these visions occur, it is as if a door were opened into a most marvellous light, whereby the soul sees, as men do when the lightning suddenly flashes in a dark night.*"[17]

Nor is such knowledge fished out of the lower subconscious, or passive memory, but rather in spite of it. The mind is illuminated in proportion as it becomes a complete blank or a *tabula rasa.*

"*The memory must be stripped and emptied of all this knowledge and all these forms; it must labour to destroy all sense of them.*"[18]

Nor is it derived from a 'cosmic reservoir of consciousness'; for such a reservoir does not exist and would moreover be inadequate to the task of supplying the soul with that which transcends all natural forms and impressions:

"*In the state of union, which is a supernatural state, the memory and the other faculties fail as to their natural functions, and rise beyond their natural objects upwards towards God, who is supernatural.*"[19]

Only after the acquisition of this new light, underivable by any amount of natural reflection, does the memory come back to its natural objects.

"*But he who has obtained the habit of union does not forget, in this way, that which relates to moral or natural reason; he performs with much greater perfection all necessary and befitting actions, though by the ministry of forms and knowledge in the memory supplied in a specially divine manner.*"

---

[14] Joly, Psychology of the Saints, p. 117; also p. 139ff
[15] Devine, Mystical Theology, p. 452.
[16] St. Teresa, Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, 3, 11.
[17] Ascent, II, 24, 5. Compare Benedict XIV, Heroic Virtue, III, 237ff.
[18] The Ascent of Mount Carmel, III, 1, 2. [19] Ibid, III, 1, 5.

It also recalls its supernatural object:

"*These visions are so deeply engraved in her memory that I believe she can never forget them until she enjoys them for evermore; for to do so would be the greatest misfortune.*"[20]

Recollection is suspended only to be doubly restored in the aftermath.

Granted that human nature remains in saint and sinner alike, and with it the natural subconscious, it seems therefore plain enough that all genuinely divine lights come through the upper, not the lower part of the soul, and are therefore aptly described as super-conscious impressions.

(3) THE SUBLIMATION OF THE WILL

Finally, we have the most fundamental feature of all: the continuity of rational freedom in the illuminative ecstasy and its more or less total destruction in the soporific trance. No created being can force the will; not even the Creator himself will coerce it, as He has once and for all decreed that the faculty of free choice shall be the basis of natural and supernatural merit, in exclusive possession of His rational subjects.* What then are we to think of a state of volitional slavery in which this noble faculty is not only lulled to sleep, but is exposed to the imminent peril of being habitually weakened and finally replaced by a foreign influence? If there is a principle above all others which mystical writers are constantly fighting for, it is the sacro-sanctity of self-possession, of the fact that no power on earth can rob the subject of that which makes him a responsible person unless he himself freely forfeits it and allows the intrusion of an alien domination.

"*We have done nothing by the purification of the understanding towards grounding it in faith and that of the memory in hope, if we have not also purified the will in the order of charity, which is the third virtue, and by which works done in faith are living and meritorious and without which they are worth nothing.*"[21]

Though the will is a blind faculty and incapable of integral action without the intellect, we may prescind from its rational object *in specie* and confine our attention to its appetition of the moral good in general, and this with an intensity which knows no parallel in the mechanical incitations offered to us in the name of a Freudian 'urge.'

(*a*) In the **demonic** trance the will is *impeded* and finally *obliterated*. With all the material that has come into our possession in the line of psychical or spiritoidal 'enchantments,' the nature of this impetus must be diagnosed by its mental and moral symptoms no less than by the dynamic energy of the will itself. A blind push means nothing unless it "brings forth fruits worthy of repentance." It must show its faith by its works.

Now although a natural ecstasy does not always entail any absolute inhibition of the power to direct, it is rare indeed that the patient comes out of it without some loss of virility and moral self-control, while an improvement or an increase of moral stamina is still more exceptional. Where is the modern psychic that can be said to be a model of virtue, an inspirer of grand and noble ideas, a visible embodiment of altruism and brotherly love, of charity, chastity and self-sacrifice? Do such persons give us the impression of being saints? The best we can say of men like Home and Swedenborg, is that they were harmless dreamers of another state of existence, who converted a few materialists and brought some rays of solace to the bereaved. And not so harmless either, when we think of their aberrations and abnormalities, their matrimonial entanglements and their moral irregularities, their broad and easy code of ethics and their very shady and slippery system of salvific universalism. Tell a man that death is pleasant and that a certain bliss awaits him, however crooked his antecedents, and you open the door to every form of libertinism and dangerous self-indulgence. And with professional mediums of

[20] Ibid, III, 1, 5; Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, 5, 13.
[21] Ibid, III, 15, 1. * St. Thom. De Veritate, q. 22, art. 9.

recent date this tendency is increased to an alarming extent. Though many are decent enough in their private lives, none are famous for philanthropy nor for religious fervor, while not a few are gravely out of the perpendicular in the affairs of the heart and give every impression of being moral wrecks and emasculated softheads.

"*I have been asked many times for my own explanation, but I have none. I only know that I can feel the force; that it seems to flow out of me; and that I obtain it in part from others. When the chain of hands is broken, I can do nothing. Strong men give me added power. (!) The movement of objects corresponds to the movements of my body and to the director of my will before I have sunk into the deep sleep. After that, as I have said, I know nothing. (!) Perhaps some day I will know all about this force. Only God and His people know now, and perhaps, the devil.*"[22]

"*Now she seems a prey to a kind of anger, expressed by imperious commands and sarcastic and critical phrases, and now to a state of voluptuous erotic ecstasy.*"[23] *Under* diabolic control this becomes still worse:

"*I know you are a devil! The pencil was gripped in my hand with superhuman force and I could not unloose my hand. I wrote the most vile language and the most terrible curses. It was just a thunderstorm of hatred and obscenity.*"[24]

"*The real truth is that some persons are born with peculiarly sensitive natures and constitutions, and are possessed of very weak wills, conditions which render them susceptible to spirit invasion.*"[25]

Contra:

(*b*) In the **divine** trance the will is not impeded, but *stimulated.* It is diametrically the opposite process. While it is not denied that the lower subconscious is dormant, and with it many of the involuntary motions of the nervous system, it is precisely the elimination of these features which makes the case for a superconscious, in fact, a supernatural control so strong for the divine seers. It is God who *pushes* the will and suggests the proper object of appetition, yet never without the consent and cooperation of the subject. Man remains in undisputed mastership of his own destiny; his actions are his in the willing, though the *power* to will the right is supplied from a divine source. And here we have the most efficient test for the discernment of spirits, for diagnosing the origin of the different kinds of alleged raptures.

This principle should be patent enough when applied to the saints, whose lives are by common consent admitted to shine with a moral and spiritual lustre which few indeed can approach or attain to. The conquest of the world, the flesh and the devil involves a gigantic *mastery* over self, and one that should be eloquent enough of a supernatural urge. Moreover, Benedict XIV speaks of three dispositions which accompany the trance,—intensity of admiration, greatness of love, and strength of exaltation or joy,—and these, as Joly says, "do not sound very much like that state of collapse which many people consider to be the chief characteristic of ecstasy."[26] The same writer justly emphasises the higher activity of the soul as against the stupor induced by a false quietism:

"*This temporary weakness of the body is only a very short intermediate stage between two periods of intense spiritual activity. It is preceded by great energy of desire and followed by great energy of action.*"[27]

But is the will sharpened *during* the trance, and can it be said that the ecstatic remains a free and responsible subject? It would seem so; and the point is argued by Suarez with great force, recognising it as the basis of merit and of personal

---

[22] Eusapia Palladino, 'My own Story,' apud Raupert, op. cit., p. 18.
[23] Lombroso, 'After Death, What?', ibid., p. 52.
[24] Supra, p. 30. [25] Raupert, op. cit., p. 20.
[26] Joly, Psychology of the Saints, p. 89. [27] Idem, p. 96.

responsibility,—a position which is followed by Devine and indeed by the most weighty authorities:

"*From what has been said of the merit of acts performed during the prayer of simple union, we may conclude with Suarez that the acts which occur during ecstasy are meritorious.*"[28]

Elsewhere this author makes much of the 'voluntarium' of moral philosophy:

"*The will in contemplation must always be supposed free, so that the acts of love elicited during that time may be meritorious. No matter how much the soul may be ravished by the object of contemplation, even to the extent of being so absorbed as not to perceive its own operations it merits at the time.*"[29]

But we must let the saints tell their own story, though we have noted their main utterances on this subject in another place.[30] The experiences of St. Teresa may be briefly summarised as follows:

"*It is true that if anyone asks me how it is that, while our faculties and senses are as much suspended as if they were dead, we are able to hear or understand anything, I can only answer that this is a secret which God has reserved, with many another, to Himself*" . . . "*The understanding stays its discursive operations, but the will remains fixed in God by love; it rules as a sovereign*" . . .

"*Why, do you think, does the soul send out these inspirations to the dwellers in the precincts of the Castle or the surrounding mansions? To send them to sleep? No, no, no! The soul wages a fiercer war to keep the powers, the senses, and the whole body from being idle than ever it did when it suffered in their company*" . . . "*Works are the unmistakable sign that these favors come from God.*"

Such an experience is the reverse of a quietistic 'reverie'; as witness:

"*It is not a spiritual sleep, but the will acts alone . . . the faculties return to God like doves which, misliking the food they seek, hasten to return to the dovecot*" . . . "*For if, instead of staying in the hive, all the bees went out one after the other, how could the honey be made?*"[31]

A greater contrast could hardly be conceived than between this Teresian 'honey,' gathered by the bees, and the Palladino 'pepper,' which savors and sweetens nothing, but which chokes the soul with its stifling subjugations.

Then also the 'passivity' demanded by St. John of the Cross is not a suspension but rather a substitution of a lower for a higher form of activity, as is evident from the 'active night' of the will, because the soul 'labors' to enter into it.[32] It is dead to earth only to live to the things of heaven:

"*Man is bidden to employ for God all his faculties and desires, all the functions and affections of the soul, so that all the skill and all the strength of the soul may minister to no other end than this, as the Psalmist says: 'I will keep my strength to Thee.' The strength of the soul consists in its powers, passions and desires, all of which are governed by the will.*"[33] "*Reveal thy presence, and let the vision of thy beauty kill me.*"[34]

The Johannine rapture has a somewhat sublimer object than the erotic trance!

A PROVISIONAL VERDICT

Of course we cannot settle this question in a few paragraphs. Nor will it be disposed of by the most inspiring quotations. People can always find fault with the sources no less than the persons from whom they emanate. They can object that the parties in question are too distant to be submissible to a scientific scrutiny; that allowance must be made for the illusions and exaggerations of the 'Spanish temperament'; that the past can never take the place of the present; that what they require is up-to-date rock-bottom certainty that such things happen and that the

[28] Devine, Mystical Theology, p. 456. [29] Idem, p. 109; cf. pp. 102ff. [30] Supra, pp. 10–11.
[31] St. Teresa, Life, pp. 138, 149; Interior Castle, Sixth and Seventh Mansion, passim, and Seventh Mansion, 4, 10–14.
[32] St. John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 6, 5. [33] Idem, III, 15, 2.
[34] Idem, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XI.

experiences can be tested and verified by a living body of scientists and saintly subjects. They want to be instantly impressed by immediate sight and touch.

Such a demand takes it for granted that we can order a miracle off-hand, that the matter belongs to the operating-table. It also implies that the world at large is worthy of such 'proof,' when as a fact it was never less worthy than it is today, when large masses of humanity are wallowing in the lowest moral slush that can well be pictured. Think of the popularity of the criminal movie and the cheap love-scandal!

Besides all this, it ignores the logical principle of cumulative historical verification,—a testimony which is based, not simply on one isolated happening in our own day, however marvellous, but on a continuous chain of mento-material-moral wonders whose reality is proved as much by their aftermath in the higher soul of humanity as by their actual one-time occurrence in the distant past. It is precisely this time-element which is so necessary and which is so lacking in the pythonic orgies. The mediums have still to earn their reputation as genuine uplifts; they are yet on trial and give little promise of furnishing the desired light and leading. With the saints all is so vastly different. They have been put to the test and have not been found wanting; they have made good; they have lifted the race. They have appealed not only to their own age, but to all time,—they are *immortal*. Moreover, their phenomena are not so distant that they do not find their analogs in many a modern convent or enclosed cenacle. The miraculous is still in the making, and who can tell when or where it may burst out afresh? Only the other day we were told of a marvellous 'apport' on the East-Indian missions, while visions and voices are so common that we would welcome any 'psychograph' that could give us the certainty that they are not self-suggestions. There is material enough to keep any psychologist busy for the rest of his days, and it is here that we look for timely cooperation.

To those, however, who are hankering after the marvelous and who insist upon immediate up-to-date evidence, we can offer a few samples of extraordinary phenomena which are taking place under our very shadows.

Professor Paschal Robinson is now investigating a case of 'stigmatisation' in Rome which has been attested by himself and countless others, and which may be verified by any person who will take the trouble to go to Foggia and to see and feel for himself. Padre Pio, the Capuchin friar, can show you, not only the 'marks,' but an actual *perforation* of his hands, accompanied by a mysterious bleeding which no amount of suggestion, still less a deliberate self-infliction, would seem to account for. If this should prove to be genuine, it would be an astounding physical phenomenon and one which we invite all our psychics to investigate. Professor Robinson will soon return to Washington to make the report and submit the matter to a scientific Commission.

Cases of 'psychic materialisation' are rare, but wonderfully realistic. The sudden appearance of a midnight visitor,—a little boy, who rang up a Priest and bade him come to a sickroom and then immediately vanished into the unknown,—is one of the mysteries of St. Aloysius. The cleric went to the given address and found that nobody had called him. '*Who sent for you?*' asked the surprised landlord. '*Why, a little boy—about ten years old . . . with such and such hair,*' and so on—making the best attempt to describe him. "*My God! Why, that is my own son, who died five years ago!*" He pointed to a loaded revolver lying on the dressing-table and said: "*Father, I was just going to blow out my brains; but you have saved me!*" . . . . The mysterious visitor has never been traced and all attempts to identify him have since been fruitless.[35]

---

[35] Reported in the Washington "Star," Oct. 24, 1922. Needless to say, these reports go with the candor and accuracy of the reporter. They would be worth very little unless their statements could be made good by a rigid inquiry into the persons, places or things with which they deal. For the latest therapeutic marvels, see the "Messenger of the Sacred Heart" and the "Semaine Réligieuse," passim. Also the official reports of the "Bureau des Constatations", a regular medical publication. The final decision rests with the Church.

Cases of incorruption or 'miraculous' preservation of the Sacred Elements are also on record. The following is a cutting from a well-known newspaper, though we refrain from making any final pronouncement on the matter:

"*The stroke of fate that saved the Blessed Sacrament and consumed all else, even the tabernacle in which it reposed, is one of those modern miracles that mortal man can never explain.*"[36]

Events and episodes like these can be proved by the sworn testimony of living witnesses. Yet even if such wonders were 'psychographed,' they would fail to carry conviction to those who are wilfully obdurate:

"*If they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, even though one should rise from the dead!*"

But apart from this question of *fact*,—one which may be regarded as settled by those who have any perception at all of the value of evidence,—I think we may say with some confidence that a comparative inspection of the combined phenomena offered to us by the saints and psychics suggests the mature conclusion, that, while the saints are apt to be higher psychics, the psychics are far from being saints, while many, alas, are in silent league with the powers of evil. This is proved by the features they have in common no less than by those which keep them apart, the exhibition of *meta*-psychical phenomena on the one hand and of *para*-psychical super-phenomena on the other,—the lifting of the soul into the divine rapture.

The truth of it is, the world is going 'subconscious-crazy'; everything is being traced to the erotic dream. Hardheaded intelligence and effective will-power are more and more at a premium. It is refreshing to turn from this to the records of these real super-men, whose thinking and willing can command the winds and waves of the lower passions to be quiet, while the upper part of the soul is basking in the sunshine of an eternal spring. The term 'super-conscious' is therefore well applied to that which comes from higher, holier and heavenly source,—something supra-liminal and *intensely conscious* of its sublime Object.

Then as to the receptacle or the supposed 'reservoir' of these impressions, it is clear from their past recollection that they must be stored up somewhere, though in what department of the psychical make-up would be difficult to determine with philosophical nicety. If we regard the superconscious as a transitory impetus, like actual grace, it will follow the nature of the latter in its passing and evanescent motions; it comes and goes with the urge of the Spirit. But if we treat it as a permanent habit or an acquired facility, something akin to sanctifying grace, it must evidently be looked for in the more interior chambers of the soul and as closely affecting its very essence,—a kind of psychical power-house. As such it would belong to the *intellectus possibilis*, or the potential mind or memory, to distinguish it from the lower subconscious, which, as we have seen, is the open door for every form of disordered phantasm. It would be the divine *concursus* in the upper intellectual sphere.

But looking aside from metaphysical subtleties, it seems sufficiently plain that it belongs to the higher, not the lower regions of the active or passive intellect and is therefore appropriately classed with the supraliminal powers. Moreover,—and we repeat it,—*the superconscious is not the supernatural, though, when infused with grace and the virtues, it readily becomes the instrument of supernatural activities*. This is a delicate distinction, but must be kept in view to allow sufficient play for the natural, and especially the supernormal phenomena. Unless they are kept apart, every successful quizzing into the unseen would be a supernatural phenomenon! For, like the relation between the saints and psychics, *the supernatural includes the superconscious, but the superconscious does not always include the supernatural*, and upon this must depend the value of much that we have noted in the preceding pages.

[36] Ibidem, Oct. 25, 1922. For a standing marvel of recent times, see "The Wonderful Crucifix of Limpias", by Baron Von Kleist, S. T. D., (Benziger–New York, 1922).

Then, when the *intellectus agens* draws the fishes out of the reservoir, it finds them well on the surface of shimmering water, not in the cesspool of the corroding undertow. This is made fairly evident by the following:

(1) *Illuminations are not derived from the organic memory, but in spite of it.* "We must strip and empty ourselves of all this knowledge and all these forms."

(2) *Illuminations are sudden and unprepared for; they are unartificial.*

"Neither the soul nor its director know their sources nor why God effects them. He sends them to whom, and why, and whenever He wills."

(3) *Illuminations are new and original; they produce an intellectual increment.* "This knowledge transcends all acts of reflection or imagination." " 'All things hidden and not foreseen, have I learned. For wisdom, which is the worker of all things, hath taught me.'"

(4) *Incitations or motions of the will counteract the physiological urge.*

"Strive always, not after that which is most easy, but after that which is most difficult, not that which giveth pleasure, but that which giveth none."

(5) *Incitations overcome the natural appetites, or transform them.*

"The two wills act together. The soul is transformed in God by love."

(6) *Incitations sublimate the organism and make it supremely efficient.*

"He performs with great perfection all necessary and befitting actions."

(7) *Body and soul are raised beyond their natural plane of operations.*

"Nothing on earth can compare to it, nor can anything at all resemble it." "It savors in some measure of the Divine Essence and of Everlasting Life."

And with this we are brought well into the mansions of the supernatural economy. Partial guesses and pitiable strives are changed into certainties and supernatural strength by *Faith, Hope and Charity*, and these in turn shall dissolve into perfect vision and perfect love when the soul has at last reached its inevitable term,—the direct intuition and eternal fruition of its Creator.

To be sure, the general position of the Church in matters of the occult admits of few reservations or fine distinctions. She frowns upon all forms of preternatural knowledge not in direct control of a Higher Power, while for the definitely diabolic there is nothing left but severe anathemas. Revelations of supposed 'angels' or discarnate spirits are accepted only when in harmony with Catholic dogma and they can be made good by the most searching inquiry into the subject's character and the general tendency of their teaching. In the vast majority of cases these conditions are not fulfilled; and hence the wise prohibition of tampering with the Unseen. *One act of charity is worth all the miracles that were ever operated*, and the genuine rapture will reveal its portentous elements quickly enough, in the moral no less than the mental and physical orders. It is in no need of spirit-cameras or psychic weighing-machines.

And this leads to the final suggestion, put forward by some of our best authorities, to make one of the tests of the higher phenomena to lie in their *spontaneous occurrence*, unwilled and unlooked for, by contrast with the *induced phenomena* of the cabinet-mediums and others, by which a state of passivity is deliberately brought on, artificially encouraged. This covers much of the debatable ground, but does not cover it all; we require more delicate and discriminating criteria, piercing into the very bone and marrow of things. The subject must make good on every plank of the human platform.

In the meantime it might be well to lay more emphasis on the different departments or 'chambers' of the soul, and not to brand everything not of the highest or holiest as necessarily diabolic or damnable. The faculty of making distinctions divides the fool from the philosopher, and all our most cautious authorities do so distinguish. There is such a thing as partial knowledge or *half-truth;* and from this point of view the blameless but benighted prober of psychic immortality, blasted

---

[1] Ascent, III, 1, 2. [2] Ibid., II, 32, 2. [3] Ibid., II, 26, 7, 10. [4] Ibid., I, 13, 6.
[5] Ibid., II, 5, 3. [6] Ibid., III, 1, 5. [7] Ibid., II, 26, 5.

by a contemptible press as a 'spook-hunter,' deserves our pity rather than our choleric censures. He is walking in a land of twilight, not in the typhonic darkness of the yellow journals. He is often in possession of a truism and is on the way to further uplift. A Crookes or a Conan Doyle have been known to pave the way for better things. For while large sections of humanity have until recently been sunk in the vilest materialism and atheistic animalism,—death being regarded as the extinction of all,—they alone have had the courage to answer the world according to its follies, to kill the materialist with his own bullets. To preach *eternal life* in lieu of *eternal death* is surely a step in the right direction, however grotesque in presentation or defective in logical cogency. For many this is indeed a 'new gospel,' though for us it is but the old one distortedly realised.

Nay more,—every modern rationalist has thrown unlimited scorn and satire upon the evangelical and hagiological 'miracles,' while *no modern spiritualist has the shadow of a doubt that miracles have occurred, not only in the life of Christ but also in those of the saints.* He is only gravely off the track in matters of dogma and has a grossly inadequate idea of what a theological miracle as a fact implies.

For, as Sir William Barrett has said:

"*To know that the dead are still living is not to know Christ. To find comfort in ghosts is not to find the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. In a word, spiritualism is not Spirituality.*"

If he probed the subject more thoroughly and occasionally sank on his knees in prayer, he would doubtless wind up, with Daniel Douglas Home, in the bosom of the Mother of Saints! And this is a consummation devoutly to be desired. When once the soul has been switched on to supernatural batteries, there will be less danger of short-circuits; when it has once inhaled the heavenly air of the roof-gardens, it will no longer stay its appetite on the dangerous miasmas emanating from the coal-cellar of its submerged consciousness.

CONCLUSION

Granting, then, that all men are subject to similar incitations and that those urges are bound to assert themselves in one way or another, it is important to sacrifice the lower to the higher urge and not to attempt to control one passion by another, which is little better than a Freudian 'transference.' Such a neuropathic philosophy is more adapted to horses than human beings. All the greatest lights of humanity are agreed that we must get out of ourselves and look to the heavens if we would obtain that mastery over the passions which no amount of introspection or psychoanalysis can ever effect. The Power must come from above, not from within the organism. No doubt it takes some courage to make the ascent, to destroy the earth-complex, to turn our backs on what seems at times so harmless and so obviously demanded by human curiosity. Two worlds are for ever confronting each other, and each is offering us a free passage, or at least a clasp of the hands, across its mysterious borders. Oh, for one voice or one whisper from that impenetrable darkness!

But the wonder of it is, that those who invest in the Bank of Eternity will receive high dividends on their outlay and that their loans will come back to them in the form of solid cash, not of a depleted currency. Nay more, they will flee from the subterranean, when they are thrilled with the *sursum corda;* nor will they waste their time with psychophones, when they can see, hear, and even mysteriously 'touch' those Blessed Spirits whom,—with the Divine Permission,—it may be their exceptional privilege to behold,—free from the noxious and nauseating veneer of a human transmission.

"SEND OUT THY LIGHT AND THY TRUTH, LET THEM LEAD ME: AND LET THEM BRING ME TO THY HOLY HILL!"

POSTSCRIPT

ON

THE PROPHETICAL AND MEDIUMISTIC 'INSIGHT'

INSTRUCTIVE ESTIMATES

"If all visions, intuitions, and other modes of communication with the supernatural, accredited now or at any time, have been no more than phenomena of psychology,—instances, that is, of subnormal, supernormal, or abnormal mental function,—and if all existing supernatural beliefs are survivals of a state of thought befitting lower stages of human development, the continuance of such beliefs cannot be helpful; it must be hurtful to human progress."

Maudsley, Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings, p. 361.

"Our psychologic medicine may be able to observe the phenomena of foresight and second sight, but has it explained them? Not every nervous excitement produces them. And who has proved that in no case a supernatural agent is active? Our ancestors believed this. Are we wiser than they, when without any scientific proof we attribute their belief on this point to universal ignorance? Ignorance will always produce fools. There are always charlatans, and always enthusiasts, victims of their own illusions. But when they undertake to prophesy, the future will show the folly of their oracles, and thus dispel the charm with which they had fascinated the simple."

M. Le Hir, Les Prophétes d'Israel, Etudes Bibliques, I, p. 6.

A TIMELY PUBLICATION!

"It is plain that prophecy is a supernatural fact, that is, a fact tending, at least indirectly, to a supernatural end. And here the question arises whether the prophets, when actually seeing the prophetic visions or hearing the prophetic words, were always in a state of *unconsciousness*. Many, with the Alexandrian school, answer in the affirmative. And according to this view and that of the pagan philosophers and the Montanists, the so-called ecstasy lasted not only while the divine communication was made, but also while the prophet communicated the same to man.

"The Fathers of the Church are unanimous in combatting this view of the prophetic state. Miltiades composed a whole book against it. Origen and St. Basil insist on the difference between the prophet and the unconscious soothsayer; St. Jerome says: 'The prophet does not speak in ecstasy, as Montanus, Prisca, and Maxillima insanely maintain, but what he prophesies he *fully understands*.' St. Chrysostom is still more explicit: 'This is the peculiarity of the "mantis," to be beside himself, to suffer constraint, to be struck, to be stretched, to be dragged like a madman. The prophet, however, is not so, but he speaks everything with calm understanding and with sound self-possession, and *knowing what he proclaims*, so that we can distinguish between the mantis and the prophet even before the fulfilment.'"

"At the same time we do not wish to exclude the *ecstatic state* from the possible conditions in which the prophet may find himself at the time he receives the divine communication. Such a condition seems to be described in Job, and more plainly in the Book of Daniel. We may compare with this the state of the apostles at the Transfiguration, of St. Peter before the divine commission to receive the gentiles into the Church, of St. Paul when he was commanded to devote himself to the conversion of the gentiles and again when he was caught up into the third heaven; finally of St. John when he received his message for the seven churches. But while we fully grant the possibility that a prophet may be in such a supernatural state when he receives his message, we at the same time maintain that the message itself is communicated to him as a vision, or as an audible voice, or as a dream, unless it be purely intellectual."

"Add to this the *supernatural certainty* which the divine light of prophecy infuses into the mind of the prophet, and at the same time the *powerful impulse* given to his will to announce his divine message, and the earnest conviction with which the prophets speak is sufficiently explained."

A. J. Maas, S. J., Christ in Type and Prophecy, Vol. I, pp. 91–96.

(But perhaps the prophetical and pythonic states are not always sufficiently separated, nor is the anti-traumatic character of the divine ecstasy brought out with full force.)

THE WORLD-WIDE DIFFUSION OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY

"On perusing the records of antiquity we are met by two most striking features pervading all the productions of literature. On the one hand, a universal wail ascends to heaven deploring the wickedness and the misery of the human race; on the other, a universal strain of expectation vibrates in the human heart, looking forward to a better future and to a coming Redeemer. The ceremonies of baptism, circumcision, and other rites of purification following among so many nations the birth of the child, are as many signs of the general belief in man's innate depravity."

"This general Hope of Redemption may be traced among the Persians, the Indians, the Chinese, the Arabians, the Greeks, the Germanic races, the Celtic races, the Esthenians, the Tribes of the Pacific Islands, the Mexicans, the Peruvians, the Algonquins, the Romans, the Etruscans, and the Sibylline seers."

"If it be asked whence these messianic predictions could have originated among the pagan nations of the ancient world, the answer may be reduced to three or four heads:

(1) On the only true supposition that all men are descended from Adam, the pagan Messianic ideas may be remnants of a primaeval revelation.

(2) One might admit that God granted from time to time a more than ordinary foresight to the pagan predictors of the future. Or,

(3) One might appeal to the intercourse between the Jews and the various nations, or at least to the spread of the Jewish prophetic literature among the literary men of the ancient world.

To say that the agreement of the various national messianic hopes is due to chance is surely a most unscientific way of explaining an established historical fact."

—*Ibidem, pp.* 56–76.

A POWERFUL DEFENSIVE WORK!

This subject is so immense and opens out so many enormous issues,—touching as it does upon the question of a PRIMITIVE REVELATION and its bearings on the supernatural Personality of Christ Himself,—that you will do well to arm yourself with a SOURCE-BOOK containing THE LATEST AND MOST PHENOMENAL DISCOVERIES OF MODERN SCIENCE ON THE SUBJECT OF THE NATURE, ORIGIN, AND DESTINY OF THE HUMAN SPECIES, FOR THE FIRST TIME COLLATED AND COUNTER-CRITICISED FROM THE REVEALED CATHOLIC STANDPOINT.

Such a volume is offered you under the title

PREHISTORIC RELIGION

A STUDY IN PRE-CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITY

A critical inquiry into the formative factors determining the earliest phenomena in the religious history of man.

Contains the earliest Persian, Cuneiform and Hieroglyphic texts and tablets, collated with the records of the primitive peoples, and throwing valuable light on the revealed tradition and on the primitive religion of the human race. Some of these are very rare and have never yet been published in the United States.

By

PHILO LAOS MILLS

D.D., S.T.L.

This volume serves as the *apparatus criticus* for the "fighting man," or the advanced scholar, who wishes to defend the fortress of eternal truth with up-to-date weapons.

IT REVERSES THE ENTIRE CLOCKWORK OF MODERN PANTHEISM AND PROVES BEYOND A QUESTION THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD AND OF CREATION.

In less than three months this book has traveled all around the world, orders having been received from far off India, Australia and South America. It is an enormous dictionary of prehistoric facts and phenomena which can not be refuted. They are impregnable. If you value the cause of sound conservative scholarship, you will immediately supply your library with this work.

Printed on fine book-paper, 700 royal octavo pages, with over 100 illustrations, including 7 chromographs, a graduated Index and comparative hieroglyphic tables. Handsome half-leather binding, stamped in gold. Price $10.00.

Washington, D. C.
1918

AN INVALUABLE SUPPLEMENT!

By the same author,—a telling tractate, entitled—

CREATION VERSUS EVOLUTION

or

The Great Question of the Day, for the first time brought prominently before the world of science and theology alike and overwhelmingly defended in favor of a

CREATIVE INTERFERENCE

A Study in recent Anthropology, or a series of three articles on the physical, mental and moral arguments for a direct creation of man by supernatural Agency, embodying the latest scientific discoveries and compiled from previous writings and reviews. Price 50 cents.

Washington, 1920

High commendations have been received from the late Cardinal Gibbons and Chief Justice White, from Cardinal Mercier and the Austrian clergy, from Bishop Shahan, Bishop Russell, Bishop O'Connell, Father Barrett, Dr. Dyer, and many other priests and prelates of light and leading.

Also from the Smithsonian Institution, the Catholic University, the American University, Johns Hopkins University, the "Month," the "Ecclesiastical Review," the "Catholic World" and "America,"—for which see the above tractate and the title-page of the present folio.

In addition to this, many private and public communications have appeared from time to time, of which the following are a few specimens:

The Rev. Timothy Barrett, S. J., co-author of the famous "Moral Theology," writes from Woodstock, Md.:

"*Father Lanham, Professor of Apologetics, has no words in which to praise your valuable work, 'Prehistoric Religion,' and I cordially endorse his sentiments.*"

"*Macte Virtute! Congratulations on your new tract on 'Creation'!*" says the Rev. Thomas I. Gasson, S. J., who reviewed the work for the Jesuit press.

Even the "Theosophical Magazine" is shaken out of its slumbers:

"*The author affirms his belief in a primaeval revelation. Many students of theosophy believe the same thing and are disposed to see in the opening chapters of Genesis, as in many other sacred scriptures, clear echoes of that primaeval revelation. Dr. Mills has, with endless patience and intuitive insight, put together a number of the pieces of the great Chinese puzzle. Here is the great 'curve of degeneration' which he has clearly seen and depicted in his diagrams.*" Jan., 1921, pp. 199–291.

All orders and communications to be addressed to the distributing center:

"The Mausoleum of the Magi"
2315 Lincoln Road, N.E.
Washington, D. C.

EX ORIENTE LUX!

"WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR IN THE EAST AND HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM"
(Matt. 2, 2.)

In preparation,—by the same writer—

ST. ELIAS, MOUNT CARMEL, DANIEL AND THE MAGIAN KINGS

An attempt to trace the line of prophesy from the Palestinian Hermits, through the Achaemenids, to the Sassanian dynasty in Persia, with a view to showing the Jewish-Palestinian connexions of the Persian Magi in the time of Christ.

A critical contribution to this subject, bringing out the chief points of discussion, with their suggested solutions, in the light of recent discoveries.

"With the poor and meek and lowly
lived on earth our Savior holy"

Next in importance to the great Messianic forerunners, culminating in the life and preaching of John the Baptist, are those gallant "kings" from the East who found the Messiah, partly through a supernatural light, partly through drawing upon the wells of Jewish-Messianic prophesy, and who paved the way for one of the most flourishing communities in the East,—the so-called "Thomas-Christians."

Ages before Nestorius had launched his heresies on the double personality of Christ this simple group of primitive believers spread the orthodox Catholic faith through large sections of the middle Orient, and their descendants are to this day the purest representatives of the ancient Syro-Chaldaean Church.

Will it not be interesting to focus this long line of development into a single picture, to trace the inspirations of the gospel "magi" to their Jewish antecedents and ultimately to the illustrious seer of Mount Carmel, the father of all the prophets?

Incidentally it is hoped this work may throw some light on the social problem and suggest a few timely considerations on poverty and wealth, collectivism and capitalistic enterprise, viewed from the platform of primitive prophetical and apostolic faith and practice.

TO APPEAR IN PRACTICAL HANDY-VOLUME FORM:
WASHINGTON, 1924.

BF 1321 qM657p 1922

00940010R

NLM 05006384 8

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE